



MCAST

MQF Level 7

RI7-05-21

Master in Research Methods

Course Specification

Course Description

The MCAST Master in Research Methods (MResMethods) programme is carried out via a taught methodology component that is then developed into a detailed research endeavour that has to be implemented, presented and defended at Master's level. Students will have demonstrated originality in the application of knowledge by designing and developing advanced research skills using specific tools and a robust methodological approach. It guides the student towards compiling peer-reviewed research articles at publishable level. It provides the student with sound practical knowledge and experience in preparation for a career that includes a significant research element, as well as in the preparation and training for a research endeavour at doctoral level.

Programme Learning Outcomes

At the end of the programme the learner will be able to:

1. *Identify main area of study and theme being researched, specifying research question/s and objectives, and critically research the literature on selected research topic*
2. *Appraise relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application*
3. *Evaluate main ethical issues implied by the choice of research*
4. *Develop and implement advanced research skills using specific tools and the corresponding methodological approach*
5. *Present and defend research outcomes before an appropriate audience, in a constructive manner.*

Entry Requirements

Relevant degree at 180 ECTS or more;

An MQF Level 5 qualification and adequate professional experience may also be considered for mature students

Current Approved Programme Structure

Unit Code	Unit Title	ECTS	Year
Post-Graduate Certificate in Research Methods			
CDRSH-706-1803	Basics of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods	6	1
CDRSH-706-1804	Research Methodology related to the Chosen Research Topic	6	1
CDRSH-706-1805	Formulating an Ethically Sound Research Proposal	6	1
CDRSH-712-1806	Designing and Piloting a Research Project	12	1
Post-Graduate Diploma in Research Methods			
CDRSH-730-1901	Research Project	30	2
Masters in Research			
CDRSH-730-2001	Dissertation	30	3
Total ECTS		90	/

Unit: CDRSH-706-1803- Basics of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

Unit level (MQF): 7

Credits : 6

Unit Description

This unit will give the candidate core research skills and insights into correct research practices and methods of data enquiry. It provides the student with the opportunity to understand and master excellently the main basic concepts in applied research and development methods. The processes learned will direct the student to collect and analyse data in quantitative and/or qualitative research. This course is linked to the student's design and piloting of the research project.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

1. *Identify a research theme;*
2. *Carry out an early literature review on existing research/knowledge on the theme;*
3. *Suggest research objective/s and possibly a research question;*
4. *Recommend a suitable research methodology and justify own choice.*

Unit: CDRSH-706-1804 - Research Methodology related to the Chosen Research Topic

Unit level (MQF): 7

Credits : 6

Unit Description

This unit will give the candidate core research skills and insights into general research design, correct methods of data enquiry such as survey methodology or in depth-interviews and methods of data analysis such as multivariate analysis or grounded theory method. This unit provides the student with the opportunity to understand and master the main basic concepts in applied research methods. In particular, the student has to demonstrate deep reading into at least two of the three methodology domains: general research methods; method of enquiry; quantitative or qualitative research methodology. For this Module students will also be tasked with undertaking out a critical literature review on their selected research topic by reviewing a reaction of peer academic journals. Students shall be expected to be able to confidently interpret the rationale and applicability of the chosen research methodology in front of an audience.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

- 1. Identify and define essential issues for general research methods; method of data enquiry; quantitative or qualitative research methodology*
- 2. Evaluate methods of data enquiry for the constructivist/qualitative and positivist/quantitative research philosophies.*
- 3. Evaluate methods of data analysis for the constructivist/qualitative and positivist/quantitative research philosophies.*
- 4. Evaluate the suitability of secondary data for answering research question(s) and meeting objectives in terms of coverage, validity, reliability and measurement bias for the chosen (qualitative or quantitative) research methodology.*

Unit: CDRSH-706-1805 - Formulating an Ethically Sound Research Proposal

Unit level (MQF): 7

Credits : 6

Unit Description

This unit gives the student core clear insights into ethical research practices, methodologies and the basic research tools and techniques utilised within the relevant ethical parameters. This unit provides the student with the opportunity to formulate an ethically sound research proposal based on the main basic concepts in applied research methods. The student specifies a Research Abstract by evaluating a preliminary critical literature review on the selected research topic based on reviewing a selection of peer academic journals and stipulating the physical or analytical outcome of the research study through the formulation of the purpose statement. In particular, the student has to specify the main area and theme of study being researched, identify the research problem, delineate the research objectives, justify the adoption of the research methodology, devise a sampling strategy to select participants, propose correct methods of data enquiry by outlining the data collection plan, draw up a Research Project Plan and evaluate main ethical issues implied by the choice of research.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

- 1. Identify the main area of study and theme being researched*
- 2. Evaluate a preliminary critical literature review on their selected research topic based*
- 3. Justify the adoption of the research methodology and propose correct methods of data enquiry by outlining the data collection plan and draw up a Research Project Plan*
- 4. Evaluate main ethical issues implied by the choice of research*

Unit: CDRSH-712-1806 - Designing and Piloting a Research Project

Unit level (MQF): 7

Credits : 12

Unit Description

This unit continues to provide the student core clear insights into research practices, methodologies and the basic research tools and techniques. It seeks to enhance the research skills required for an academic, both to allow for more effective mentoring of undergraduate dissertation students but also to enable the academic to become a competent researcher in his/her own right. Other participants will also enhance their research skills in their respective fields. This unit provides the student with the opportunity to design and pilot a research project. The student formulates and clarifies the research topic; generate ideas that help in the selection of a suitable research topic; transforms research ideas into a research project that has valid research question(s) and objectives. The student also formulates the research design and identifies the main research strategies. In particular, the student selects quantitative and/or qualitative data collection method and critically reviews the literature; primary, secondary and tertiary literature sources; the relevance, value and efficiency of the literature found accurately. The student evaluates the main ethical issues implied by the choice of research. The student discusses and analyses findings from the data collected, whilst ensuring credibility of research findings by emphasizing factors relating to Reliability and Validity. The report, of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 words, is written in a coherent, structured and appropriate way; organising the project's content which encompasses a background to the study delineating the research question/s and corresponding objectives, selection of research methodology and research enquiry, drawing up of conceptual model, analysis of findings, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

1. *Identify the main area of study and theme being researched*
2. *Evaluate a preliminary critical literature review on their selected research topic based*
3. *Justify the adoption of the research methodology and adopts correct methods of data enquiry*
4. *Analyse findings from data collected and draw up conclusions. Formulate the conceptual model, where necessary.*
5. *Evaluate main ethical issues implied by the choice of research*

MCAST

Unit: CDRSH-730-1901 - Research Project

Unit level (MQF): 7

Credits : 30

Unit Description

The Post-Graduate Diploma in Research Methods, is a natural progression for candidates successfully completing the research certificate and wishing to further enhance their research skills. Before proceeding to the second stage of the Research Methods program, the student would have completed successfully the Post-Graduate Certificate in Research Methods. Through this Certificate, the student would have developed and enhanced core research skills; acquired a basic understanding of the broader context of research; critically appraised and interpreted preliminary secondary literature and prepared a research proposal of appropriate research design, measurement criteria, and consideration towards ethical issues. The second stage is that of the Post-Graduate Diploma in Research Methods, at a further 30 ECTS cumulating to a total of 60 ECTS. A stronger focus is placed here on methods of data enquiry and on key techniques for data analysis and interpretation. Within this second stage the candidate will be further exposed to robust quantitative and qualitative data acquisition and analytic methodologies, and sound research writing practices.

Candidates that opt for the Quantitative approach are directed to both descriptive and exploratory multivariate techniques utilizing tools such as SPSS. Candidates that adopt a Qualitative stance shall learn how to carry out qualitative analysis on textual data using basic grounded theory concepts, and using tools such as MAXQDA. A main component of this stage shall be the implementation of a research project that builds from the pilot research endeavour carried out in the first stage.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

1. *Confirm the identification of the main area of study and theme being researched*
2. *Evaluate an enhanced critical literature review on the selected research topic*
3. *Justify adoption of research methodology and selection of correct methods of data enquiry through effective use of resources and tools*
4. *Evaluate main ethical issues implied by the choice of research.*

MCAST

Unit: CDRSH-730-2001 - Dissertation

Unit level (MQF): 7

Credits : 30

Unit Description

The Masters in Research is a natural progression for candidates successfully completing the research diploma and wishing to further specialise in their research skills. Before proceeding to the third stage of the Research Methods program, the student would have completed successfully the Post-Graduate Certificate in Research Methods and completed successfully all the learning outcomes of the diploma programme. The third stage of the programme is the full Masters in Research, building from the initial two successive stages, at a further 30 ECTS cumulating to a total of 90 ECTS. This research endeavour shall build from the applied research components of the first two stages, utilizing the design and preparation of the first stage and the pilot implementation of the second stage to develop a sound and defensible research endeavour. A stronger focus is placed here on methods of data enquiry and on key techniques for data analysis and interpretation. Within this third stage the candidate will be further exposed to robust quantitative and qualitative data acquisition and analytic methodologies, and sound research writing practices. This third stage is carried out via a detailed research project that has to be presented to, and defended before a select, expert audience.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit the learner will be able to

1. *Identify main area of study and theme being researched, specifying research question/s and objectives, and critically research the literature on selected research topic*
2. *Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application*
3. *Evaluate main ethical issues implied by the choice of research.*
4. *Develop and implement advanced research skills using specific tools and the corresponding methodological approach.*
5. *Constructively present and defend research outcomes before an appropriate audience.*