

## Research Methods for Social Policy Course Details

Department: NGO Management & Policy Development

Presented by Magna Skills Development Institute

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## Course Summary

The main objective of the module is to provide delegates with an overview of methodological issues and perspectives of high relevance to social work and social policy research. This will enhance delegates knowledge of key concepts and research paradigms and of the comparative perspective. The delegates will acquire a reflective knowledge of the research process and the use of critical perspectives, both in examining a research text and in carrying out their own research.

They will look at specific ethical dilemmas and will obtain the skills in using different research methods and different research frameworks while doing social work and policy research

## Course Objectives

- The course will offer a variety of social sciences and social work research methodologies, build on the doctoral delegates previous knowledge. Specifically the course will offer an interdisciplinary overview of key issues in qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods methodologies.
- It will help the delegates to design, develop and successfully complete the methodological part of the doctorate thesis, making them competent for future scientific research work in social work and social policy.
- The course will alert delegates and their supervisory team to further work needed on a specific issue related directly to their thesis and will offer opportunities for discussion with peers and course facilitators.

## Course Outline

### **Research philosophy and values in social work and social policy research.**

- The stakeholders in the research process;
- Ethical issues in research
- Disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses;
- Dominant research paradigms, their underlying assumption on
- knowledge, history and development:
- Critical theories.

### **Research frameworks, methods and perspectives.**

- Comparative perspectives;
- Critical perspective in social work and social policy research;
- Historical perspective in social work research;

- Theory (hypothesis) testing approach
- Action Research: Participatory Action Research and Collaborative
- Inquiry;
- Case study: single case vs. multiple embedded case study;
- Quasi experimental designs;
- Phenomenological research;
- Ethnographic research;
- Grounded theory;
- Memory theories;
- Realistic evaluation;
- Validity and reliability, Trustworthiness and conformability

### **Research methods and specific methodological tools:**

- General frameworks: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed methods;
- Questionnaires;
- Surveys;
- Interviews (problem oriented interview);
- Biographical methods (narratives; oral histories);
- Self report and diaries;
- Focus groups;
- Use of documentary data .

### **Implementing knowledge and theories into the research process.**

- Key stages in the research process:
- Formulating research questions;
- Literature review;
- Creating a conceptual framework/ hypothesis formulation ;
- Establishing the research design;
- Applying for ethical approval;
- Data collection;
- Data analysis (per quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods);
- Writing up the thesis;
- Dissemination of the research results.

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