

Research Methods Qualitative (F710359)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

seminar

independent work

practical

group work

lecture

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

De Pourcq, Kaat

EB23

lecturer-in-charge

Verleye, Katrien

EB23

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

[Bachelor of Arts in Moral Sciences](#)

crdts 5

offering A

[Bachelor of Science in Public Administration and Management](#)

5

A

[Master of Science in Complementary Studies in Business Economics\(main subject Business Economics\)](#)

5

A

[Linking Course Master of Science in Public Administration and Management](#)

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Qualitative reserach, qualitative research approaches, case study research, phenomenology, narrative research, ethnography, grounded theory, action research, qualitative data-analysis, coding, interpreting, data analysis software.

Position of the course

This course aims to familiarize students with different qualitative research approaches and their relevance in public administration and socially relevant contexts.

More particularly, students gain insight into the essential characteristics of different qualitative research approaches and the way in which these approaches can be implemented in a public administration and socially relevant context with specific attention for developing a qualitative research design in relation to a specific research- or policy problem and gathering, analyzing, and reporting qualitative data.

Additionally, students are challenged to critically reflect upon extant (inter)national research in a public administration and socially relevant context and apply the different steps in a qualitative research process and reflect upon these steps in group and individually.

Contents

The nature of qualitative research

- Qualitative versus quantitative research
- The role of qualitative research in a public administration and socially relevant context
- Essential characteristics of different qualitative research approaches, more particularly phenomenology, grounded theory, narrative research, ethnographic research, case study research, and action research.

The implementation of different qualitative research approaches

- Research design in relation to research or policy problem
- Gathering qualitative data (incl. access to data)
- Analyzing qualitative data (incl. difference between inductive, deductive, and abductive research)
- Reporting qualitative data
- Ethical issues associated with the qualitative research process

Data gathering and analysis techniques

- Qualitative data gathering techniques in practice with specific attention for interviews, observations, and documents
- Qualitative data-analysis in practice with specific attention for qualitative data analysis software

Initial competences

No initial competences are required.

Final competences

- 1 **Understand** the importance of qualitative versus quantitative research to tackle research and policy problems, thereby paying specific attention to wicked problems in public administration and socially relevant contexts. .
- 2 **Understand** the essential characteristics and the implementation of different qualitative research approaches to tackle policy- and research problems, more particularly grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, case study research and action research.
- 3 **Critically reflect** upon the appropriateness of qualitative research approaches and the way in which qualitative research approaches are implemented to address specific policy and research problems in (inter)national research with specific attention for the research questions/aims, the research design, the data gathering and analysis, reporting, and research ethics
- 4 **Critically reflect** upon the own skills to implement qualitative research approaches
- 5 **Apply** qualitative research approaches in relation to specific research and policy problems in **a thoughtful way** with specific attention for formulating research questions/goals, developing a research design, and research ethics
- 6 **Apply** different techniques to gather qualitative data in **a thoughtful way** with specific attention for interviews, observations, and documents
- 7 **Apply** different techniques to analyze and report qualitative data in **a thoughtful way** with specific attention for the inductive, deductive, and abductive logic
- 8 **Report critical reflections** with regard to extant (inter)national research based upon qualitative research approaches, the own implementation of qualitative research approaches, and the own skills to implement qualitative research approaches in an oral and/or written way

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Practical, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

During this course, different didactical methods are combined to allow students to achieve the learning objectives.

Lectures - whether or not online - allow students to gain insight into qualitative versus quantitative research to address research and policy problems in a public administration and socially relevant context and the essential characteristics and the implementation of different qualitative research approaches to address policy and research problems. Additionally, extra readings are provided via Ufora.

Critical reflection about the appropriateness of qualitative research approaches and the way in which these research approaches are implemented to address specific policy and research problems in (inter)national research happens during (online) **seminars with guided exercises and/or online discussion groups.**

The application of qualitative research approaches in relation to specific research

and policy problems happens by means of a **group assignment** and the application of datacollection and analysis techniques by means of an **individual assignment**.

Finally, an (online) **seminar with guided exercises** (including qualitative data analysis software) are organized to apply respectively qualitative data gathering and analysis techniques.

Study material

Type: Handbook

Name: Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches

Indicative price: € 80

Optional: yes

Language : English

Author : John W. Creswell, Cheryl N. Poth

ISBN : 1-506-33020-7

Number of Pages : 488

Oldest Usable Edition : 4th edition

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : regularly

Additional information: Students who cannot attend classes can use this book to supplement the slides and scientific papers.

Type: Slides

Name: Online presentations lectures and seminars

Indicative price: € 7

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Number of Slides : 300

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : No

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Additional information: Students can choose to print out the slides, which involves an additional cost. This is recommended as there is an open book exam at the end of the course.

Type: Reader

Name: Articles from scientific journals

Indicative price: € 7

Optional: no

Language : English

Number of Pages : 200

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : Yes

Available through Student Association : No

Additional information: Students can choose to print out the scientific papers, which involves an additional cost. This is recommended as there is an open book exam at the end of the course.

References

Mortelmans, D. (2013). Handboek kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethoden. Leuven/Den Haag: Acco.

van Thiel, S. (2015). Bestuurskundig onderzoek. Een methodologische inleiding (2e druk). Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho.

Creswell, J. W., en Poth, C.N. (2016). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches. Sage Publications

Course content-related study coaching

Students are invited to ask questions before, during, and after lectures and can use the discussion space on Ufora. During the seminars, students can get extra support from the professor/assistant. Finally, feedback sessions are organized in relation to the group and individual assignment.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment open-book

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Skills test, Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

The end-of-term evaluation happens by means of an open book exam and accounts for 50% of the final score.

The permanent evaluation counts for 50% of the final score and involves participation before or during (online) seminars and practica, a report associated with the group assignment and an individual assignment.

Calculation of the examination mark

End-of-term evaluation: 50%

Permanent evaluation: 50%

To pass, a student should pass both the end-of-term and the permanent part of the evaluation.

If you have less than 10/20 for one of the two evaluation forms (i.e., end-of-term evaluation and permanent evaluation), you can no longer pass the course as a whole. If the final score is a grade of ten or more out of twenty, this will be reduced to the highest unpassed grade (i.e. 9/20).

Second-chance exam period: depending on the deficit, a written exam (for the end-of-term evaluation) and/or individual assignment (for the non-periodical evaluation) will be given. The grades of the evaluation form for which the student has passed, will be carried forward to the second-chance exam period.