

ULSTER UNIVERSITY

**ERASMUS RADIOGRAPHY GROUP
(RADIOTHERAPY)**

Co-ordinator Mrs Andrea Mullan
a.mullan@ulster.ac.uk

School of Health Sciences
Faculty of Life & Health Sciences

Student Module Handbook

2024-25

Module Title: **Research Project**

Module Code: **OTH501** CRN : **58938**

Module Coordinator:

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

1.1 What are the aims/objectives of the module?

The module develops your skills in using and producing research evidence.

The aims of the module are:

- (i) to provide a foundation of knowledge and skills required to design and conduct research and clinical audit post registration ;
- (ii) to develop skills in reviewing evidence to inform practice

1.2 Why am I studying this module?

There is an emphasis throughout healthcare on an evidence-based approach to clinical practice. Practice should be underpinned by sound research evidence in order to ensure that the tests and interventions used are the most effective and safest options.

In this module, you will learn how to formulate a clinical question and apply your knowledge of research design and qualitative and quantitative methods to use or produce research evidence to answer that question.

The module provides experience of planning and undertaking an independent study on a topic related to practice. Students will have an opportunity to undertake a research proposal involving the design of a research study to produce evidence to inform practice.

1.3 How will I be taught? and 1.4 What am I going to learn?

Within this module you will have an opportunity to undertake an independent research project - a research proposal. Your course tutor will provide guidance on the nature of your research project and the allocation or approval of your topic/title. While you are expected to undertake the research project with a level of independence expected of a final year student, you will be supported throughout the module:

- To help you with the project there are lectures on developing an appropriate research question and on planning, conducting and writing a research proposal.
- You will be allocated a supervisor who has a particular interest in the topic for your project. You will meet regularly with your supervisor (individually or in small groups) for guidance in conducting your project.
- There are learning materials and resources on Blackboard Learn (Bbl) to help you with your project. In addition, the skills pack provides general

advice on, for instance, how to study effectively on this module and the issue of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a growing problem and the University have checks in place and strict guidelines on dealing with students who submit plagiarised work. It is important that you are aware of what constitutes plagiarism so that you can avoid it.

1.5 Who will deliver of the module?

1.5.1 Module coordinator

The module coordinator is They have overall responsibility for coordinating the delivery of the module and the assessment and collation of marks.

1.5.2 Course tutors

Staff from each of the courses will contribute to the delivery of the module. Each course will have a designated member of staff (course tutor) who will provide course specific guidance on the project, including the selection or allocation of topics/titles, the allocation of supervisors and the marking of the project. The course tutor will also lead the course-specific seminars.

BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology
Terri Flood
School of Health Sciences
Tel: +442871675927
Email: t.flood@ulster.ac.uk

1.5.3 Project Supervisors

You will be allocated a supervisor who has a particular interest in the topic for your project. Meetings with your supervisor will take place either in a small group setting, along with the other members from your class who have been assigned the same supervisor or on an individual basis, depending on your supervisor. It is compulsory that you attend all of the meetings scheduled for supervision.

Please refer to the project supervision policy (appendix I).

2. MODULE DESCRIPTOR

MODULE TITLE: Research Project

MODULE CODE: OTH501

RATIONALE

This module focuses on the concepts and principles of research design and how research can be used to inform practice. The module provides experience of planning and undertaking an independent study on a topic related to practice.

AIMS

The main aim of the module is to develop knowledge and skills required to *produce* and *use* research evidence to inform practice.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

A successful student will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1 Explain the concept of evidence-based practice
- K2 Discuss the key stages of the research/ review cycle
- K3 Apply principles and concepts of research design
- K4 Critically discuss ethical issues in relation to clinical research

INTELLECTUAL QUALITIES

- I1 Critically appraise research literature to argue a case for research/systematic review questions relevant to practice
- I2 Apply principles and concepts of statistical analysis

PROFESSIONAL/PRACTICAL SKILLS

- P1 Plan and manage a research project
- P2 Communicate information to an appropriate audience

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

- T1 Use IT skills
- T2 Take responsibility for personal and professional learning and development

3. TEACHING SCHEDULE

3.1 Lectures

A series on online lectures and resources are provided.

4. ASSESSMENT

4.1 How am I going to be assessed?

The module is assessed by coursework only.

4.2 Coursework: Research project

You will undertake the following type of project:

- Research proposal

Supervision

You will be allocated a supervisor who will guide you with your project. The supervision policy can be found in Appendix I

Weighting: 100%

Word limit: 4000

Word count

The word count will exclude the following: reference lists (but not the references cited in the text); images; figures; figure legends and appendices. Everything else, by default, is included i.e. title page, contents, acknowledgements, abstract etc are included.

The correct word count must be clearly stated. 5% will be deducted for exceeding the word limit (e.g. a mark of 60% will be reduced to 55%).

Submission date:

24 March 2025

Submission instructions:

You are required to submit two electronic copies of your project into the 'Turnitin assignment drop boxes' in your course area for the module on Bbl on or before the date shown above.

This will allow marking and checking of the word count and also to check for plagiarism.

Format

The format for research project (font style, size and spacing etc) should adhere to the School of Health Sciences Code of Practice for Written Assignments:

- All written assignments should be in font type Arial, font size 12 and line spacing 1.5.
- A cover page must be provided. This should include the following: student ID number; module code and title; name of module co-ordinator; name of supervisor, assignment title; word count; date of submission.
- The correct word count must be clearly stated. 5% will be deducted for exceeding the word limit (e.g. a mark of 60% will be reduced to 55%).
- Correct referencing, using the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences Referencing Standard (see Referencing Standard in the Information Area of the module on Blackboard)
- Plagiarism will be dealt with through the formal University disciplinary procedures. If permitted to resubmit, a maximum of 40% will be awarded.
- Work not submitted on time without prior approval will be failed and a maximum mark of 40% awarded for the resubmission.

Assignment requirements:

You can access information on conducting and writing up each type of project (systematic critical review, research proposal and research report) on Bb right from the beginning of the semester. Have a look at this and make yourself aware of what is expected of you.

4.3 Why is the module assessed in this way?

The project assesses your application of knowledge about clinical research and your ability to undertake a piece of independent work. It provides an opportunity for you to undertake a study, often (although not always) in an area of particular interest to you.

5. MARKING GUIDELINES

The marking criteria for the research proposal can be found in appendix II

6. REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READING

6.1 Required reading

Polgar, S. and Thomas, S. A. 2013. *Introduction to research in the health sciences. (6th edn)*. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone.

6.2 Recommended reading

Aveyard, H. 2014 *Doing a literature review in health and social care: a practical guide*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

<http://www.coursesmart.co.uk/IR/5704171/0335263089?hdv=6.8>

Aveyard, H. and Sharp, P. 2013. *A beginner's guide to evidence based practice in health and social care (2nd edn)*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Bowling, A. 2014. *Research methods in health: investigating health and health services (4th edn)*. Maidenhead; Open University Press.

Bowling, A. 2005. *Measuring Health: a review of quality of life measurement scales*. Maidenhead; Open University Press.

Creswell, J. W. and Plano Clark, V. L., 2011. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London; Sage

De Vaus, D.A. 2002. *Surveys in social research, 5th edn*. London: Routledge.

Enderby, P. 2006. *Therapy outcome measures for rehabilitation professions: speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, 2nd edn*. Chichester: Wiley.

Hissong, A., Lape, J., Bailey, N. (2014) *Bailey's research for the health professional. 3rd Edn*. FA Davis & Co, USA. Publications

Pallant, J. 2013. *SPSS survival manual: a step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for windows (5th edn)*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Punch, K. (2016) *Developing effective research proposals. 3rd Edn*. London: Sage Publications.

Ross, T. 2012. *A Survival Guide for Health Research Methods*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill

6.3 Useful Web Sites

Refworks

Video guides and user guides to RefWorks can be found at the Library link below : Video guide 18 addresses creating a Bibliography and there is a user guide explaining how to select a bibliographic output style (you must be logged on to the University Student Portal)
<http://library.ulster.ac.uk/electronic/check/eiscard.php?eisno=277>,

Cochrane Library tutorials

Self-paced tutorials on Cochrane Library - (see Under Evidence based Medicine) can be found at the link below.. You need to register but it is free. They include search and MESH, saving searches and alerts. 19 minutes in total.

<http://olabout.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-397512.html>

Critical Appraisal

CASP

Critical appraisal skills programme for health professionals with critical appraisal tools for different types of study.

www.nhs/casp-uk

RCTs - Consort statement

<http://www.consort-statement.org/home>

7. STUDENT ADVICE (tips from previous students)

- Think about areas of interest for your project before the exchange.
- Don't let your work on the project fall behind – keep making steady progress.
- Plan for your supervision sessions. Prepare questions for your supervisor.

APPENDIX I

Project supervision policy

Allocation of supervisor

Each student will be allocated a supervisor who has a particular interest in the project topic.

Purpose of supervision

To support and guide the student with the project

Nature and amount of supervision

It is recommended that there is regular project supervision of between 6-8 hours. Supervision may occur in groups or on a one to one basis. The student(s) and supervisor will discuss and agree a schedule of regular meetings.

Role of the supervisor

The role of the supervisor is to

- be available to meet with the student and agree a schedule of meetings
- engage with the student in a collaborative manner to set an agenda and agree to a schedule with targets, objectives, actions and timelines
- sign off agreed objectives, targets and actions on the project supervision log after each formal meeting.
- the supervisor may read a single draft of the student's work in sections and will consider student led specific questions related to the manuscript. This is not intended as a pre-reading exercise, rather it is to respond to specific student led queries with constructive criticism in a timely manner.
- make the student aware of unsatisfactory progress or standard of work and arrange any supportive action as necessary
- access the submitted project in the Turnitin drop box in the module area to check the word count and the plagiarism report and inform the module coordinator if action is required.

Role of the student

The role of the student is to

- accept ultimate responsibility for the agreed project
- make the initial contact with the supervisor to agree a regular schedule of meetings
- develop, in consultation with the supervisor, an agreed timetable for managing and progressing the project
- assume responsibility for the direction and progression of the project
- submit written work for review and comment by the supervisor at the agreed times
- record and sign off a record of agreed objectives, targets and actions on the project supervision log after each formal meeting
- provide adequate explanation for any failure to meet commitments including meetings
- advise both your supervisor and the EBP module coordinator of any major changes to your project (e.g. change of title)
- make appropriate use of teaching and learning opportunities provided by the University , both formal and informal
- take the initiative to raise any problems for discussion with the project supervisor, module co-ordinator or course director, as appropriate
- ensure the project is submitted, taking due account of advice and recommendations of the supervisor and also the School code of practice for written assignments and the submission requirements.

PROJECT SUPERVISION LOG

A record of student/supervisor meetings should be recorded and signed off by both student and supervisor

Activity	Week or due date	Date completed	Comments	Signatures: Student Supervisor

APPENDIX II
OTH501 : Research Proposal Mark sheet

Student ID/ name:.....

Mark

Title and abstract 5%	<i>Does the title accurately and succinctly describe the proposed study? Has an accurate and clear abstract been presented (e.g. background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings).</i>
Mark	Comment
Introduction 20%	<i>Is the introduction structured with well-reasoned arguments that build a clear case for the proposed study? Does the introduction give an appropriate-rationale for the study in the context of what is already known? Is there good use of relevant literature?</i>
Mark	Comment
Aims 5%	<i>Are there appropriate aims/ objectives? Are these clearly and accurately stated?</i>
Mark	Comment
Methods 30%	<i>Is there a comprehensive yet succinct explanation and justification of the methods to be used in the proposed study? (who? what? where? how?). Has the target population, sampling techniques and sample size been specified and explained? Data collection - How have variables been operationalised?: Have outcome measures been specified and justified?</i>

	<p><i>Has a survey been designed and a draft presented in the appendices?</i></p> <p><i>What measures are proposed to reduce bias and ensure reliability and validity e.g. blinding, rater reliability, piloting of studies.</i></p> <p><i>In the case of qualitative studies, how will the data be recorded what measures will be taken to ensure rigour? Has an interview schedule been presented in the appendices?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any inaccuracies or omissions?</i></p>
Mark	Comment
Ethics 10%	<i>Have ethical concerns been discussed? Are information sheets and consent forms (presented in appendices) appropriate?</i>
Mark	Comment
Data analysis 10%	<i>Are proposed methods for analysing data explained and justified? For qualitative data, have measures to ensure rigour and trustworthiness been proposed e.g. bracketing, triangulation? For quantitative data, have null and alternative hypotheses been presented (if appropriate), have descriptive statistics and statistical techniques/tests been specified and justified (level of measurement, design of study, parametric/non-parametric, number of groups/variables)?</i>
Study implications 5%	<i>How well have the potential implications of the findings for practice been discussed?</i>
Mark	Comment

