MODULE SPECIFICATION

Academic Year (student cohort covered by specification)	2026-27
Module Code	1104
Module Title	Principles of Social Research
Module Organiser(s)	Ford Hickson and Ruth Ponsford
Faculty	Public Health & Policy
FHEQ Level	Level 7
Credit Value	**CATS:** 10 **ECTS:** 5
Term of Delivery	Term 1
Mode of Delivery	For 2026-27 this module will be delivered by predominantly face-to-face teaching methods. Where specific teaching methods (lectures, seminars, discussion groups) are noted in this module specification these will be delivered by predominantly face-to-face sessions. There will be a combination of live and interactive activities (synchronous learning) as well as recorded or self-directed study (asynchronous learning).
Mode of Study	Full-time
Language of Study	English
Pre-Requisites	None
Accreditation by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body	None
Module Cap (indicative number of students)	n/a
Target Audience	Level 7 learners intending to read, use and be involved in the production of both quantitative and qualitative social research. This module is good preparation for Health Care Evaluation (1400), Qualitative Methodologies (1700), Medical Anthropology and Public Health (1802), and Sociological Approaches to Health (1803).
Module Description	Ten weekly units each consisting of: a preparatory activity and/or assigned reading (approximately 3 hours); a whole-class live lecture and Q&A (1 hour); an interactive small-group seminar (1½ hours).
Duration	10 weeks at 0.5 days per week

Timetabling slot	Term 1
Last Revised (e.g. year changes approved)	August 2026

Programme(s) This module is linked to the following programme(s)	**Status**
MSc Public Health	Compulsory
MSc Demography & Health	Compulsory
MSc Reproductive & Sexual Health Research	Compulsory
MSc Public Health for Global Practice	Compulsory
MSc Climate Change and Planetary Health	Recommended

Module Aim and Intended Learning Outcomes

Overall aim of the module

The overall module aim is to:

- introduce the basic principles of practice and theory in social research and to demonstrate their application to the empirical study of health.

Module Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the module a student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of key concepts in social research methodology
2. Identify appropriate research designs for a range of research questions in health
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs and data collection methods
4. Critically evaluate published social research studies
5. Demonstrate an understanding of how social research findings can be used in public health disciplines

Indicative Syllabus

Session Content

The module is expected to cover the following topics:

- What is social research?
- Social research ethics
- Documentary approaches
- Observation and ethnography
- Generating and analysing qualitative data
- Measurement and social surveys
- Social experiments
- Literature reviews and data synthesis

Teaching and Learning

Notional Learning Hours

Type of Learning Time	Number of Hours	Expressed as Percentage (%)
Contact time	25	25%
Directed self-study	30	30%
Self-directed learning	15	15%
Assessment, review and revision	30	30%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Student contact time refers to the teacher-mediated time allocated to teaching, provision of guidance and feedback to students. This time includes activities that take place in face-to-face contexts such as lectures and seminars, as well as where seminar leaders are available for one-to-one discussions and interaction by email.

Directed self-study is where instruction is given as to what to study, or what activities to engage in.

Self-directed learning refers to students pursuing their individual interests using the module reading lists.

The division of notional learning hours listed above is indicative and is designed to inform students as to the relative split between interactive (online or on-campus) and self-directed study.

Teaching and Learning Strategy
Each week students are directed to preparatory work which should be carried out before the lecture. This will include assigned reading/s and in some weeks a practical activity. The preparatory activities give a taste of observation, document selection, question design, interviewing and qualitative data analysis. Each lecture is approximately 50 minutes and are delivered by researchers in the Faculty of Public Health and Policy, followed by a 10-15 minute question and answer session. Seminars provide space for discussion of the lecture and preparatory materials, debriefing of the activities and processing of learning.

Assessment

Assessment Strategy
The assessment for this module has been designed to measure student learning against the module intended learning outcomes (ILOs) listed above. A formative assessment is used in Week 5 to assess students' progress and to familiarise them with the assessment format. This does not count towards the final degree. The summative assessment of this module is by written assessment released at the end of the module (week 10) to be handed in Week 0, Term 2. Students will respond to one multi-part question within 1200 words. The grade for this summative assessment will go towards the overall award GPA.

Summative Assessment

Assessment Type	Assessment Length (i.e. Word Count, Length of presentation in minutes)	Weighting (%)	Intended Module Learning Outcomes Tested
Written assessment	1200 words maximum	100%	1 to 5

Resitting assessment
Resits will accord with Chapter 8a of the LSHTM Academic Manual The Resit assessment will be the same assessment type as the first attempt (see previous table).

Resources

Indicative reading list

- Durand MA, and Chantler T (2014) *Principles of Social Research, 2nd Edition*. Open University Press.
- Clark T, Foster L, Sloan L and Bryman A (2021) *Bryman's Social Research Methods, 6th edition*. Oxford University Press.
- Seale C (2018) *Researching Society and Culture, 4th Edition*. SAGE Publications.

Teaching for Disabilities and Learning Differences

The module-specific site on Moodle provides students with access to lecture outlines and copies of lecture slides prior to its delivery. All lectures are recorded as delivered and made available on Moodle as quickly as possible. All materials posted up on Moodle areas have been made accessible where possible.

The LSHTM Moodle has been made accessible to the widest possible audience, using a VLE that allows for up to 300% zoom, permits navigation via keyboard and use of speech recognition software, and that allows listening through a screen reader. All students have access to "SensusAccess" software which allows conversion of files into alternative formats.

For students who require learning or assessment adjustments and support this can be arranged through the Student Support Services – details and how to request support can be found on the LSHTM Disability Support pages.