CONCEPT

Qualitative Research Methods: Interviews, Thematic Analysis and Policy Insight

12 – 16 July 2027
London - Central London four-star



Qualitative Research Methods: Interviews, Thematic Analysis and Policy Insight

Ref: 492_16656 **Date:** 12 – 16 July 2027 **Location:** London - Central London four-star **Fees:** 25300 SAR

Introduction:

Qualitative research methods give policy, strategy and programme teams evidence on why people act as they do, yet many studies rely on loosely run interviews, unrecorded coding decisions and findings that cannot be traced back to the data. Recommendations then rest on anecdote. This Core Concept course builds practical skill in qualitative design, purposive sampling, interviewing, focus group moderation, document analysis, coding and thematic analysis, and in turning themes into needs assessments and policy options. Participants complete a mini qualitative study with a coded dataset and findings brief.

Course Objectives:

- Frame an exploratory research question and justify a qualitative, quantitative or mixed design for a policy, strategy or programme decision
- Select a case study, phenomenological or grounded theory approach and plan purposive sampling with a saturation rationale
- Conduct in-depth interviews and moderate focus groups using tested topic guides, probing techniques and field notes
- Code transcripts, documents and online sources in CAQDAS and develop, review and name themes through reflexive thematic analysis
- Demonstrate trustworthiness through audit trails, member checking, reflexive memos and ethical consent procedures
- Convert qualitative themes into needs statements, policy or strategy recommendations and a traceable findings brief

Target Audience:

- Research and evaluation functions that design and run interview-based and field studies
- Policy analysis functions that gather stakeholder perspectives to inform policy options and reviews
- Strategy and planning functions that explore organisational problems before setting priorities
- Programme and social service functions that assess community or beneficiary needs
- Information centre and knowledge functions that locate, appraise and synthesise documentary and online evidence

Course Outline:

Day 1: Qualitative Inquiry Foundations and Research Framing

- Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Decision Matrix
- Interpretivist and Pragmatic Paradigms in Applied Policy Research
- Exploratory Research Question Canvas: Who, What, How and Why
- Stakeholder Map and Evidence Gap Scan for a Policy or Programme Issue
- Desk Research Protocol: Grey Literature, Databases and Online Source Appraisal

Day 2: Qualitative Research Designs and Purposive Sampling

- Case Study Design: Single, Multiple and Embedded Case Boundaries
- Phenomenology Overview: Lived Experience and Bracketing Notes
- Grounded Theory Overview: Constant Comparison and Theoretical Sampling
- Purposive, Snowball and Maximum Variation Sampling Plans
- Saturation Rationale Worksheet and Recruitment Tracker

Day 3: Fieldwork: Interviews, Focus Groups, Observation and Documents

- Semi-Structured Topic Guide with Probes and Follow-Up Prompts
- In-Depth Interview Role Practice: Rapport, Silence and Neutral Probing
- Focus Group Moderation Plan: Group Dynamics, Dominant Voices and Timing
- Participant Observation Field Notes and Reflexive Journal Entries
- Document and Online Content Analysis Grid for Reports, Minutes and Web Sources

Day 4: Coding, Thematic Analysis and Research Quality

- Transcription Conventions, Verbatim Standards and Anonymised Transcript Files
- Braun and Clarke Six-Phase Reflexive Thematic Analysis Walkthrough
- CAQDAS Project Set-Up: Codebook, Code Hierarchies, Memos and Queries
- Lincoln and Guba Trustworthiness: Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability
- Research Ethics File: Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Data Retention Controls

Day 5: Case Work: Mini Qualitative Study and Findings Brief

- Social Service Case: Needs Assessment from Beneficiary Interview Extracts
- Public Policy Case: Stakeholder Focus Group Transcripts and Theme Map
- Coded Dataset Build: Theme Table with Supporting Quotations
- Findings to Recommendations Matrix: Needs, Options and Evidence Strength
- Findings Brief Drafting, Peer Audit and Presentation

Skills You Will Gain:

- Qualitative Research Design
- Purposive Sampling
- In-Depth Interviewing
- Focus Group Moderation
- Document Analysis
- Reflexive Thematic Analysis
- Qualitative Data Coding
- Evidence-Based Needs Assessment

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a mini qualitative study, a coded dataset and a findings brief built from realistic transcripts and documents
- Run interviews and focus groups that yield rich, usable data instead of short opinions and leading answers
- Show sponsors how each recommendation traces back to coded evidence, memos and an audit trail
- Compare how policy, strategy and social service teams from different sectors use qualitative insight in decisions

Conclusion:

Qualitative evidence earns its place in decisions only when its design, fieldwork and analysis can be followed and checked. The week moves from framing questions and choosing designs, through purposive sampling, interviews, focus groups, observation and document review, to transcription, coding, reflexive thematic analysis, trustworthiness and ethics. The final day applies these methods to social service and public policy cases, producing a mini qualitative study with a coded dataset and a findings brief that participants can adapt to their next study.