

NZQA Assessment Support Material

Unit standard	9007				
Title	Conduct an independent qualitative sociological enquiry				
Level	3	Credits	6	Version	3

Note

The following guidelines are supplied to enable teachers to carry out valid and consistent assessment using this internal assessment resource. In time, as quality examples of assessment activities become available naturally through the moderation process, these materials may be modified to include a variety of assessment activities and assessment schedules.

Teachers must manage authenticity for any assessment from a public source, because students may have access to the assessment schedule or to student exemplar material.

This assessment resource will need to be modified before it is used. The teacher needs to ensure that the assessment materials given to the student state the unit standard number, the title and the version of the standard being assessed, and the conditions under which the assessment is to take place (for example, as an in-class test or as a homework activity). The teacher may need to set an appropriate context, select relevant resources and modify tasks. The teacher will need to develop an appropriate assessment schedule by adding evidence and judgement statements.

Teacher guidelines

Context/setting

Students undertaking an assessment activity for this standard will require an understanding of the various methods of collecting quantitative data and their relative advantages and limitations. In particular, students should have an understanding of the Scientific Method and be able to conduct research using the Scientific Method. Students also need to consider the ethics involved in conducting sociological research. This should be part of the teaching and learning prior to the assessment.

In this activity students will conduct an independent qualitative sociological enquiry. This unit standard is one of a series of three standards concerned with conducting qualitative sociological research. The three standards are differentiated principally by the level of student/researcher independence in the enquiry process. A qualitative enquiry includes the entire process from identifying the research question to the final reporting and conclusion.

A qualitative sociological enquiry requires the collection and analysis of essentially non-statistical data. Qualitative data collection methods could include but are not limited to: non-participant observation, participant observation, and unstructured interviews.

At level 3, the teacher/supervisor may provide 'limited guidance' to the student, whose research is largely self-directed and self-managed. The teacher's role may involve:

- Asking questions, prompting students to rethink and/or re-orient their research.
- Making suggestions, pointing out possible problems, but not telling the students exactly what they should do to solve these.
- Suggesting readings and alternative angles and perspectives.

THIS UNIT STANDARD CAN BE AWARDED WITH AN ACHIEVED, MERIT, OR EXCELLENCE GRADE

AWARD OF GRADES

- For award with **Achieved**, students are able to conduct an independent qualitative sociological enquiry. This requires that: planning defines and develops a research question and a methodology; data collection and analysis are appropriate to the enquiry; findings are reported and appropriate conclusions are justified; conclusion(s) use sociological concepts; and strengths and limitations of the research are evaluated with particular reference to the validity of the data and the conclusions.
- For award with **Merit**, the findings will be in detail and the conclusions will be supported by appropriate evidence from the enquiry data, and will use sociological ideas and concepts.
- For award with **Excellence**, the findings will be in depth, the conclusions will be comprehensive and supported by a range of appropriate evidence from the enquiry data, and will use sociological ideas and concepts.

Conditions of assessment

The conditions under which the assessment is to be completed will be set by the teacher.

Assessment activity

This assessment activity has five tasks related to the research process and scientific method.

Task One

Students select a topic to be investigated and come up with questions in need of answers about that topic. These questions may be of a general or specific nature, depending what the student/researcher wants to find out. After exploring what they know about this topic and perhaps doing some background research on it, students may develop one or more hypotheses about how the topic can be explained.

Task Two

Students decide on the research methods to be used to collect the data. The most common forms of qualitative research methods are unstructured interviews (or semi-unstructured) and observation (participant and non-participant). The student should plan how, when and where they are going to carry out their research. Students select an appropriate sample and, in their planning, consider relevant ethical issues. Relevant considerations for students include:

- Who are you going to observe or interview?
- How many people will you observe or interview?
- When and where will you conduct your observations or interviews?
- How will you record your data?
- What do you think you may find out?
- What problems might you face when undertaking this research?

Students write a research proposal which specifies their topic, their research question(s) and one or more hypotheses, the research methods to be used, the size of the sample and a timeframe showing when each stage of the research will be completed. The student can ask questions and check with the teacher before undertaking the research.

Task Three

Using their chosen methods and guided by their research questions, students collect and record data to test their hypothesis(es).

Data may be recorded in a number of ways, including writing, photography, sound recording, and video recording.

Task Four

Students analyse their data and 'write up' their findings and conclusion(s) in a research report. These conclusion(s) should be relevant to the enquiry and use sociological concepts.

Task Five

Students reflect on their enquiry and evaluate the strengths and limitations of their data and conclusions. These strengths and limitations must be discussed in the research report.

The research report should include the following:

1. Title page with the title of the research and an abstract (a short paragraph summarising what the research is about)
2. Table of contents
3. Research question(s) and hypothesis(es)
4. Research Methods
5. Statement of Findings
6. Evaluation of Research Process: the strengths and limitations of the research. Students should consider (among other things) the validity of their data and the reliability of their conclusions.
7. Bibliography (if appropriate)
8. Appendices: (may include any or all of) copy of the research proposal, field notes (observations), copy of interview questions, photographs or illustrations.

Resource requirements

When considering the ethics involved in sociological research, teachers and students may find the Code of Ethics developed by the *Sociological Association of Aotearoa (New Zealand)* to be useful. The ethics can be accessed at: <http://ethics.iit.edu/ecodes/node/3219>.

Possible topics

Teachers may choose to keep the research activity within the school and have students observe and/or interview their peers.

Possible topics for a qualitative enquiry may include:

- Student attitudes towards school (in NZ and/or compared with schooling abroad if participants were educated overseas)
- Student behaviour in selected contexts (classroom, playground, peer groups, sports teams, committees, etc.)
- Perceptions about the roles and responsibilities of men and women when it comes to domestic chores.
- Interactions between teacher/students in selected contexts.
- Non-participant observations of small children in selected contexts (the playground / in a playgroup / at a kindergarten / etc.)
- Behaviour of onlookers at a sports event.
- Student ideas about what a 'perfect society' would look like.
- Attitudes and impressions of life in the city versus the country.
- Comparison of the experiences / values / attitudes of old and young New Zealanders.

Additional information

Teaching and learning guidelines that inform sociology as it is taught in New Zealand can be found at www.nzqa.govt.nz/sociology.

Assessment Schedule

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Teachers will need to develop an assessment schedule that is appropriate to the assessment activity and the context, by adding evidence and judgement statements. Evidence is examples of acceptable student responses to the various tasks being assessed; judgements indicate the quality and/or quantity of the student response needed to meet the requirements of the unit standard.

It may be convenient (but it is not compulsory) to format an assessment schedule as a table.

Judgements and evidence for Achievement	Judgements and evidence for achievement with Merit	Judgements and evidence for achievement with Excellence
[Teacher to insert judgement and evidence statements.]	[Teacher to insert judgement and evidence statements.]	[Teacher to insert judgement and evidence statements.]
Examples of acceptable student responses:	Examples of acceptable student responses:	Examples of acceptable student responses:

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Student Instructions Sheet

Introduction

This assessment activity requires you to conduct an independent qualitative sociological enquiry.

A qualitative sociological enquiry requires essentially non-statistical data to be collected and analysed. Qualitative data collection methods could include but are not limited to: non-participant observation, participant observation, and unstructured interviews.

Your teacher may provide only 'limited guidance', meaning your research is largely self-directed and self-managed.

THIS UNIT STANDARD CAN BE AWARDED WITH AN ACHIEVED, MERIT, OR EXCELLENCE GRADE

AWARD OF GRADES

- For award with **Achieved**, you must be able to conduct an independent qualitative sociological enquiry. This requires that you:
 - Plan your enquiry, develop a research question and choose a methodology. This should be done in a written research proposal.
 - Collect and analyse data that are appropriate to the enquiry.
 - Report findings and present justified conclusion(s) relevant to the enquiry.
 - Use sociological concepts in your conclusion(s).
 - Evaluate the strengths and limitations of your research. You should consider (among other things) the validity of your data and the reliability of your conclusions.
- For award with **Merit**, the findings will be in detail and the conclusions will be supported by evidence from the enquiry data and will use sociological ideas and concepts.
- For award with **Excellence**, the findings will be in depth, the conclusions will be comprehensive and supported by evidence from the enquiry data, and will use sociological ideas and concepts.

Conditions of assessment

The timeframe and conditions for assessment will be set by your teacher.

Assessment activity

This assessment activity has five tasks related to the research process and the scientific method.

Task One

Choose a topic to be investigated and come up with questions in need of answers about that topic. These questions may be of a general or specific nature, depending on what you as the researcher wants to find out. After exploring what you know about this topic and doing some background research on it, develop a research question(s) and if it is appropriate, one or more hypotheses about how the topic can be explained.

Task Two

Decide on the research methods to be used to collect the data. The most common forms of qualitative research methods are unstructured (or semi-structured) interviews and observation (participant and non-participant). Plan how, when and where you are going to carry out your research. Select an appropriate sample and consider relevant ethical issues.

Write a research proposal which specifies your topic, your research question(s) and hypothesis(es), the research methods to be used, the size of the sample and a timeframe showing when each stage of the research will be completed. You can ask questions and check with the teacher before undertaking the research.

Task Three

Collect and record data to answer your research question(s) and test your hypothesis(es). How you record your data is your decision to make, but data may be recorded in a number of ways, including writing, photography, sound recording, and video recording.

Task Four

Analyse your data and 'write up' your findings and conclusion(s) in a research report. These conclusion(s) should be relevant to the enquiry, use sociological concepts and be justified.

Task Five

Reflect on your enquiry and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your research, paying particular attention to your data and conclusions. These strengths and limitations must be discussed in the research report.

Your research report should include the following:

1. Title page with the title of the research and an abstract (a short paragraph summarising what the research is about)
2. Table of contents
3. Research question(s) and hypothesis(es)
4. Research Methods
5. Statement of Findings
6. Evaluation of the Research Process: evaluate the strengths and limitations of your research with particular focus on the validity of your data and the reliability of your conclusion(s).
7. Bibliography (if appropriate)
8. Appendices: (may include any or all of) copy of the research proposal, field notes (observations), copy of interview questions, photographs or illustrations.