

Conducting Online Focus Groups

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This course provides participants with an in-depth introduction to successfully conducting and facilitating online focus groups. Traditionally, online focus groups have tended to be viewed as inferior to the traditional physical 'face-to-face' focus group. However, online focus groups can vary in form and offer us a valuable means by which to conduct social research with a range of diverse groups via various information and communication technologies. The course covers the principles and benefits of online focus groups, and the challenges which online communication poses when conducting focus groups virtually. We cover how to design, conduct and facilitate a synchronous online focus group using voice and video technologies. Participants are provided with guidance and the opportunity to practice running an online focus group, including strategies for participation and ethical considerations.

This introductory course will benefit researchers who are new to qualitative research methods and those who already have a basic understanding of qualitative research methods but are new to conducting focus groups in online settings.

Programme

10.00 – 10.15	Welcome, introductions and housekeeping
10.15 – 10.45	Introduction to online focus groups: principles, benefits and challenges
10.45 – 11.15	<i>Breakout 1: How will you use online focus groups?</i>
11.15 – 11.45	Morning break
11.45 – 12.30	Practicalities of conducting online focus groups
12.30 – 13.15	<i>Breakout 2: Design your online focus groups</i>
13.15 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 15.15	<i>Breakout 3: Conduct an online focus group</i>
15.15 – 15.45	Afternoon break
15.45 – 16.00	<i>Discussion of breakout 3</i>
16.00 – 16.15	Final considerations and ethics
16.15 – 16.30	Reflections and Q&A
16.30	Close