

An Introduction to Qualitative Interviewing

Qualitative interviewing is a popular method in social research and it is often described as a conversation between interviewer and interviewee. It allows us to collect detailed and rich information about individuals' lives, their experiences, behaviours, and how they understand and make sense of the world. The rich insight it provides into people's lives is one of the benefits which the method offers over standardised surveys or questionnaires.

This introductory level course introduces participants to the method of qualitative interviewing. This includes its benefits, examples of effective interviewing, and the key ethical and practical issues to be considered. We look at types of qualitative interview which include structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In particular, we explore the benefits of semi-structured interviewing which involves a combination of pre-set open ended questions with room for the exploration of other (sometimes unanticipated) topics. We also briefly consider how to conduct qualitative interviews face-to-face and in online settings. Participants gain experience of designing their own interview schedule and of conducting a semi-structured interview.

By the end of the workshop, participants will have knowledge of various forms of qualitative interview and theories of interviewing. They will be able to distinguish between various types of interviews and questioning. They will be aware of practical and ethical issues which must be considered prior to interviews. They will also be able to design their own semi-structured interview schedule and conduct a semi-structured interview.

Programme

10.00 – 10.15	Welcome and introductions
10.15 – 10.30	<i>Workshop 1: What challenges do you face when conducting qualitative interviews?</i>
10.30 – 11.30	Part 1: Introduction to qualitative interviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Principles and benefits ➤ Types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured ➤ Sampling and interview relationships
11.30 – 11.45	Morning break
11.45 – 12.15	Part 2: How to design a qualitative interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Designing an interview schedule and topic guide ➤ Questioning: open and closed ➤ Probing and interview questions
12.15 – 13.00	<i>Workshop 2: Designing a qualitative interview schedule</i>
13.00 – 13.45	Lunch break
13.45 – 14.30	Part 3: How to conduct a qualitative interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Preparing for your interview ➤ Face-to-face and online interviews ➤ Interview tools
14.30 – 15.30	<i>Workshop 3: Conducting your qualitative interviews</i>
15.30 – 15.45	Discussion of workshop 3
15.45 – 16.00	Summary, reflections on the day and final questions
16.00	Close