



**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX  
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**Social Research Methods in Psychology**

BSc Psychology Year 2 core module

**C8300**

MSc Experimental Psychology core module

**303C8**

15 Credits

**Term 2 (Spring) 2017**

**Module Convenor: Dr John Drury**

**NOTE: Most of the questions you need answers to about this module are in this Handbook. Please read it fully and carefully before your first lecture and practical.**

**NOTE: This document concerns the structure and content of the module. If you have questions about procedures, please consult the School of Psychology Office or via [psychology@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:psychology@sussex.ac.uk)**

## Module information and requirements

[C8300 Social Research Methods in Psychology](#) (BSc Psychology)  
[303C8 Social Research Methods in Psychology](#) (MSc Experimental Psychology)

### ***Module structure, aims and objectives***

This module complements the Term 1 module 'Discovering Statistics'. It has three components: (a) statistical analysis for questionnaire construction, measurement and interpretation; (b) observational methods; (c) qualitative data-gathering and analysis. There are two assessed empirical reports using some of these techniques, which will enable students to develop skills in research design, data-gathering and analysis, and which will therefore equip students for their empirical research projects. The statistical analysis parts of the module builds upon existing knowledge of statistical theory (in the Term 1 module). Practical workshops complement the lectures by providing hands-on experience and guidance in using the methods, both with SPSS and through small group work on relevant tasks.

### ***Module learning outcomes.***

By the end of the module, a successful student should be able to:

1. Understand the theory and use of questionnaire design and scale construction, factor analysis, reliability analysis, moderation and mediation analysis. Conduct these analyses using SPSS.
2. Understand the principles and practice of observational methods, including sampling issues, coding and inter-rater reliability estimates.
3. Understand the rationale for, uses of and limitations of the following qualitative methods of data-gathering and analysis: interviewing, thematic analysis and discourse analysis.
4. Carry out independent research to address a psychological question using some of these methods and present their research in a written report following the conventions of the discipline (i.e. APA format).

## Teaching and learning

### ***Lectures***

There will be ten lectures on this module (see Lecture and Practical Class Overview, below).

Formal assessment will be based on material covered in the lectures, practicals **and** your core reading for each week. It is also important for you to understand that lectures will **NOT** attempt to 'cover' **all** such material (and nor will practicals). That is, lectures and practicals are not intended to provide an alternative to you learning the material in your core reading. Any attempt to rely solely on learning material presented in lectures and practicals will severely restrict your ability to do well during formal assessment of this module.

### ***Practical classes***

Practicals for this module will each last for two 'teaching hours' and will usually follow each lecture (see Lecture and Practical Class Overview, below). Please see your timetable in [Sussex Direct](#) for details of *when* and *where* your practicals will be held.

The practicals are intended to give students hands-on experience of each research method on the module. Actively using the method will facilitate greater understanding and learning than simply hearing about a method in a lecture. The practicals are also an opportunity for practical guidance from the module tutors.

You will be allocated to one practical class for the duration of the term. These allocations are organized centrally by the university timetablers based on your other timetabling commitments. As module convenor, I am not able to change practical classes, but requests can be made to the Psychology School Office who will attempt to swap classes for anyone who has work or childcare commitments.

The Teaching Fellow and practical tutors record attendance, and anyone turning up to the wrong practical class will be politely refused entry to the class. The classes may be full to capacity so if extra people turn up it causes havoc. Please co-operate with the tutors by turning up to the correct practical class, being quiet when asked and listening to what they have to say. Also, tempting as it may be to spend the sessions checking your email/Facebook during computer-based practical classes, this won't help you pass your exams!

## Lecture and practical class overview

You will find dates and times of lectures, workshops and seminars on your timetable on [Sussex Direct](#). Initials below indicate name of lecturer (for details, see 'Contacting us', below).

Week	Lecture	Practical	Notes on assessment
1	<b>Lecture 1:</b> How to design a questionnaire (for lab report) (KL)	<b>Practical 1:</b> How to design a questionnaire (for lab report) (Computing lab)	
2	<b>Lecture 2:</b> Factor analysis (for lab report) (KL)	<b>Practical 2:</b> Factor analysis using SPSS (for lab report) (Computing lab)	
3	<b>Lecture 3:</b> Reliability analysis (for lab report) (KL)	<b>Practical 3:</b> Reliability analysis using SPSS (for lab report) (Computing lab)	
4	<b>Lecture 4:</b> Moderation and mediation analysis (ME)	<b>Practical 4:</b> Mediation analysis for SPSS (Computing lab)	
5	<b>Lecture 5:</b> Observational methods 1: Sampling and coding protocols (DL)	<b>Practical 5:</b> Moderation analysis for SPSS (Computing lab)	
6	<b>Lecture 6:</b> Observational methods 2: Inter-rater reliability estimates (DL)	<b>Practical 6:</b> Observational methods: sampling, coding and inter-rater reliability (for coding exercise) (Seminar room)	
7	<b>Lecture 7:</b> Interviewing (JD)	<b>Practical 7:</b> Interviewing (Seminar room)	Submit lab report
8	<b>Lecture 8:</b> Qualitative analysis 1: Thematic (JD)	<b>Practical 8:</b> Thematic analysis (Seminar room)	

Week	Lecture	Practical	Assessment notes
9	<b>Lecture 9:</b> Qualitative analysis 2: Discourse (JD)	<b>Practical 9:</b> Discourse analysis (Seminar room)	
10	[no session]	[no session: labs available for work on coding exercise]	End of Week 10: Feedback on lab report
V	<b>Vacation</b>		
V	<b>Vacation</b>		
11	[no session]	[no session: labs available for work on coding exercise]	Coding exercise submitted
12	<b>Lecture 10:</b> Exam preparation and introduction to final-year projects (JD and Eisuke Koya)	<b>Practical 10:</b> Revision session: Sample exam paper discussion (Seminar room)	

## Contact information and getting help

The lectures are given by Dr John Drury, Dr Karen Long, Dr Dave Leavens, and Dr Matthew Easterbrook. The practicals are taught by tutors, with teaching plans designed by the lecturers.

The tutors will tend to be your first port of call for questions; they will teach you how to use the methods introduced in the lectures, and will guide and support you through your projects and reports. These tutors answer to me (John Drury) as Module Convenor and regularly feed back information to me about how the module is running. (We do communicate with each other and can try to change things if need be.) The practical tutors are amazing as both an intellectual and emotional support during the module — so, be nice to them.

You will be allocated a practical tutor who marks all of your work. You will meet this tutor in your first practical. Remember this person: they are the person you should be mainly talking to for advice and so on (because they mark your work).

**Jennifer Mankin** is the Teaching Fellow. She runs the practical classes and helps me with the organization of the module. If for any reason you don't feel able to talk to your practical tutor, or to me about some problem relating to the module, then you can ask Jennifer ([J.Mankin@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:J.Mankin@sussex.ac.uk)).

### Contacting us

Jennifer and the practical tutors each have Student Feedback sessions ('office hours'). The practical tutors' hours will mostly be scheduled around the time of your two coursework assessments (see Lecture and Practical Class Overview, above). Individual tutors will organize the time and place for these in due course and will contact the students in their practical class with details. If you have questions about any aspect of the module, you can use these Student Drop-in Hours, [Study Direct](#) or e-mail the relevant lectures (see below).

The module lecturers' contact details are below. Their Student feedback sessions are on their doors or on their profile pages online. However, given that there are around 300 students on the module it's pretty impossible for us to cope if everyone emails us directly. So, we'd rather people used the [Study Direct](#) discussion forums (see below), which we and the tutors check on a regular basis. If all else fails, then obviously don't be afraid to email me (see flow diagram below).

Convenor/Lecturer: Dr John Drury  
 Location: Pevensey1 2B22  
 Telephone: 01273-(87)2514  
 E-mail: [j.drury@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:j.drury@sussex.ac.uk)

Lecturer: Dr Matthew Easterbrook  
 Location: Pevensey2 3B4  
 Telephone: 01273-(87)6597  
 E-mail: [m.j.easterbrook@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.easterbrook@sussex.ac.uk)

Lecturer: Dr Karen Long  
Location: Pevensey1 2C6  
Telephone: 01273-(87)7073  
E-mail: [k.m.long@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:k.m.long@sussex.ac.uk)

Lecturer: Dr Dave Leavens  
Location: Pevensey2 4B3  
Telephone: 01273-(67)8526  
E-mail: [davidl@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:davidl@sussex.ac.uk)

Head tutor: Jennifer Mankin  
Location: Pevensey1 2B20  
Telephone: extension 6651  
E-mail: [J.Mankin@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:J.Mankin@sussex.ac.uk)

As module convenor, I (John Drury) am the ultimate source of enquiries and information for this module (see flow chart below). I have two Student feedback sessions a week (check my door or my home-page) but PLEASE take the time to check module documentation and the [Study Direct](#) discussion forums (see below) for an answer first.

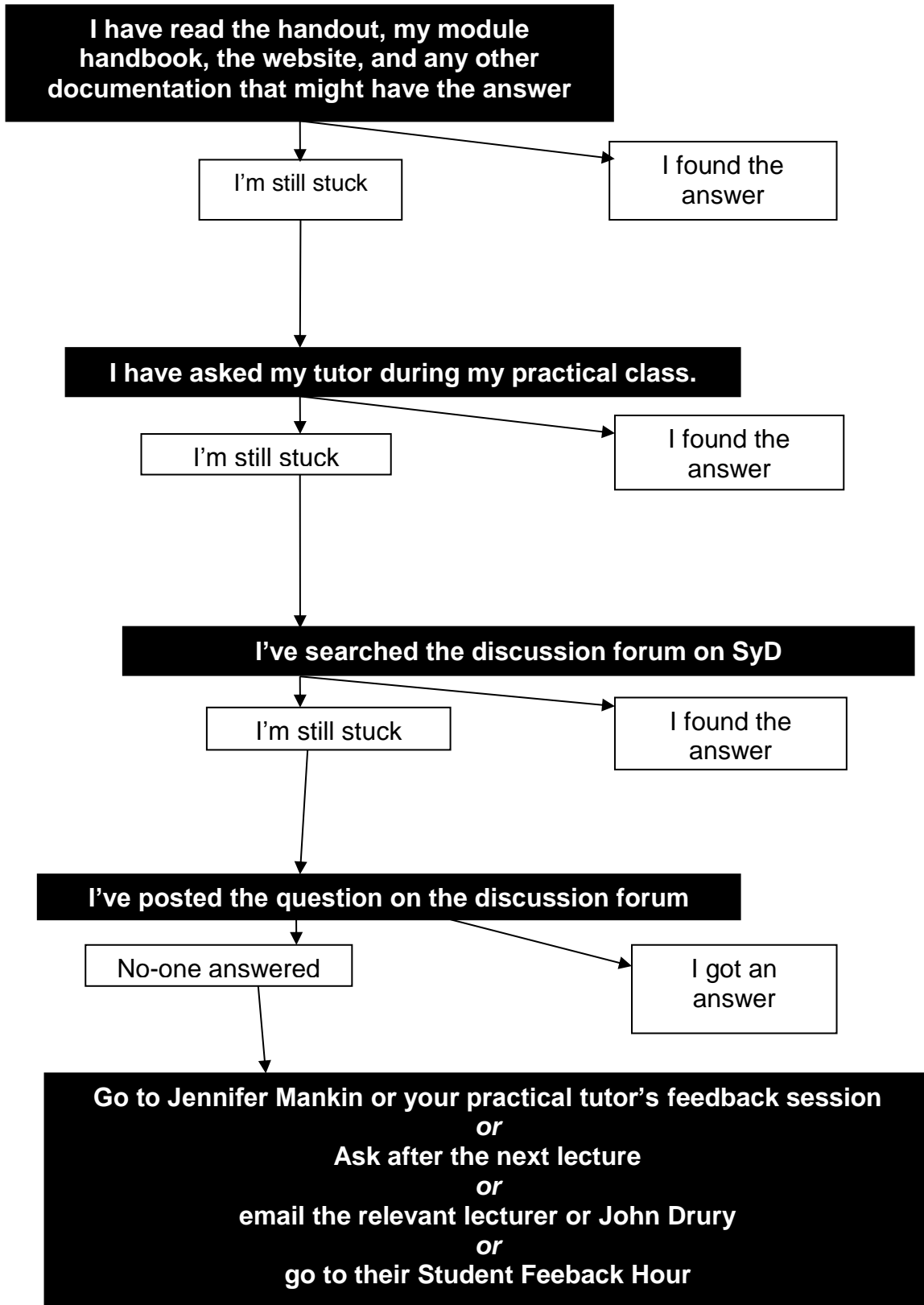
### ***The Study Direct site: Resources and enquiries***

The [Study Direct](#) site contains all module documentation, including this Handbook, lecture slides, audio files, and practical materials. The site also contains discussion forums. The forums have been set up so that you can ask questions about any aspect of the module (content, teaching, assessment, marking); the tutors and lecturers will answer them and in doing so all of you will be able to see the answers so it will save others the time of having to ask.

### ***Student Mentors***

This module is part of the student-mentoring scheme. The scheme will be promoted via email and study direct.

**How to find the answer to your query – flow chart** (adapted from Field, 2009)





## Topics and readings

All readings are available via the Talis library list:

<http://liblists.sussex.ac.uk/lists/AD92E96A-AF4F-8426-9034-C44756641049.html>

### Topic 1: How to design a questionnaire (KL)

#### *Core reading*

Fife-Shaw, C. (2012). Questionnaire design. In G. M. Breakwell, J. A Smith, & D. B. Wright (Eds.) *Research methods in psychology* (4th ed., pp. 113-139) London: Sage.

#### *Recommended reading*

Schwarz, N. (1999). Self-reports: How the questions shape the answers. *American Psychologist*, 54, 93-105.  
Available on [Study Direct](#).

### Topic 2: Factor analysis (KL)

Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (4th ed.). London: Sage. (Chapter 17).

### Topic 3: Reliability analysis (KL)

#### *Core reading*

Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (4th ed.). London: Sage. (Chapter 17, Section 17.9; See also excerpt on [Study Direct](#))

#### *Recommended reading*

Cortina, J. M. (1993). [What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications.](#) *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 98–104.

### Topic 4: Moderation and mediation analysis (ME)

#### *Core reading*

Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (4th ed.). London: Sage. (Chapter 10, all sections up to 10.5: pp. 392-418).

#### *Recommended reading*

These two websites are excellent and succinct summaries:

Kenny, D. A. (2015, March 31). Moderation. <http://davidakenny.net/cm/moderation.htm>

Kenny, D. A. (2015, November 12). Mediation. <http://davidakenny.net/cm/mediate.htm>

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). [The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations.](#) *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1173-1182

### **Topic 5: Observational methods 1: Sampling and coding protocols (DL)**

Martin, P., & Bateson, P. (2007). *Measuring behaviour: An introductory guide*. (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 3 and 5)

### **Topic 6: Observational methods 2: Inter-rater reliability estimates (DL)**

Martin, P., & Bateson, P. (2007). *Measuring behaviour: An introductory guide*. (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 7)

### **Topic 7: Interviewing (JD)**

#### *Core reading*

Breakwell, G. M. (2012). Interviewing. In G. M. Breakwell, J. A. Smith, & D. B. Wright (Eds.) *Research methods in psychology* (4th ed., pp. 367-390). London: Sage.

#### *Recommended reading*

Howitt, D. (2013). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology*. Harlow, UK: Pearson. (Chapter 3)

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (3rd edn.). Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/Open University Press. (pp. 29-32)

### **Topic 8: Qualitative analysis 1: Thematic analysis (JD)**

#### *Core reading*

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (3rd edn.) Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/Open University Press. (Chapter 6)

#### *Recommended reading*

Howitt, D. (2013). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). Harlow, UK: Pearson. (Chapter 7)

Smith, J. A., & Eatough, V. (2012). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In G. M. Breakwell, J. A. Smith, & D. B. Wright (Eds.) *Research methods in psychology* (4th ed., pp. 439-459) London: Sage.

**Topic 9: Qualitative analysis 2: Discourse analysis (JD)**

*Core reading*

Wiggins, S. (2017). *Discursive psychology: Theory, method, and applications*. London: Sage. (Chapter 6)

*Recommended reading*

Antaki, C., Billig, M., Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (2002). [Discourse analysis means doing analysis: A critique of six analytic shortcomings](#). *Discourse Analysis Online*, 1

Gibson, S. (2011). 'I'm not a war monger but...': Discourse analysis and social psychological peace research. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 22, 159–173.

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. (3rd edn.). Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/Open University Press. (Chapters 10 and 11)

## Assessment

For this module you will be assessed by two pieces of coursework and an exam. Year 2 students on the C8300 version will also obtain some of your coursework credits from participation (or assistance) in research (referred to as professional log on your assessment timetable).

### Assessment for C8300 (Year 2)

Assignment	% of Total Mark	% of Coursework Mark
Report (Laboratory report on questionnaire design, reliability and factor analysis)	30%	50%
Problem Set (Observation coding and inter-rater reliability exercise)	25%	42%
Professional Log (Research participation completed)	5%	8%
2 hour Unseen exam (closed book)	40%	N/A

### Assessment for 303C8 (MSc)

Assignment	% of Total Mark	% of Coursework Mark
Report (Laboratory report on questionnaire design, reliability and factor analysis)	35%	58%
Problem Set (Observation coding and inter-rater reliability exercise)	25%	42%
2 hour Unseen exam (closed book)	40%	N/A

## Coursework

The **lab report** is a write-up of a project carried out in a small group. Tutors will organize you into groups early in the term. Although you will devise the questionnaire and collect data in your group, your analysis (statistics – factor analysis and reliability analysis) and your write-up must be your own individual work. There is a limit of 2500 words for this assignment.

The **observation/coding exercise** involves coding video and an inter-rater reliability test.

The work should be **double spaced** and **only your candidate number should appear on the actual report**. Work must be submitted electronically.

## **Assessment information**

Assessments deadlines and methods of submission can be found on your assessment timetable via Sussex Direct.

Information on the following can be found at the link below:

- Submitting your work
- Missing a deadline
- Late penalties
- Exceptional circumstances
- Exams
- Help with managing your studies and competing your work
- Assessment Criteria

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/internal/students/examinationsandassessment>

## **How the reports are marked**

The assessment criteria for practical reports is displayed on the following School web page:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/internal/students/examinationsandassessment/criteria>

The teaching fellow and practical tutors mark the laboratory report and problem set (observation exercise). It's worth mentioning how marking is done as this will hopefully reassure you that provisions are in place to make sure that marks are equitable.

- Before a set of reports is marked, the relevant lecturer meets with all markers to discuss generally what they should be looking for, what they should give credit for and so on. In short, we give them general guidelines about what we expect.
- Each tutor, when they begin marking a particular assessment, will submit to the relevant lecturer the first few reports they have marked, which s/he blind marks. The lecturer then compares marks and qualitative comments with those of the tutor and makes some general decision about whether the person is marking too lightly/too harshly and discusses this with them so they can change accordingly for the remaining reports.
- During the entire marking process, we also look at any reports about which the marker is unsure or is having problems with (for whatever reason).
- When all reports for a particular assessment have been marked, we look at the distribution of marks from each marker to check that these are comparable and in line with the sorts of distributions we might expect. If a marker is being 'harsh' (or lenient for that matter) this is clear from their distributions of marks. If this does happen their marks will be raised or lowered accordingly before they're entered into the University Coursework Management System. This is why your cover sheets say 'marks are provisional'.
- At the end of the year, all of this information is given to an external examiner (an academic from a psychology department in a different university). They will look at distributions of marks, look at any decisions I've made to lower or raise marks for the module as a whole and generally have the power to change any decisions if they don't think I've acted in line with what happens at other universities.

In line with University regulations, every effort will be made to ensure that one marked copy of each report is returned with online feedback within 15 working days of the relevant submission deadline.

## The exam

Examination details and timetables are displayed on your Sussex Direct assessment deadlines timetable. The School Office will not give out details of individual exam times.

Note that **the exam could cover any of the material on the module.**

The exam is worth **40%** of your final mark for the module (see above). The exam is two hours long and has two parts:

- Part 1 consists of a number of multiple-choice questions (MCQs).
- For Part 2 you will then have to answer 3 'long answer' questions on stats.

The exam is a **closed book ('unseen') exam**. You cannot take anything into the exam (other than a University-regulation calculator<sup>i</sup>). The best strategy for revision is to come to all of the lectures, attend your practical classes and get lots of practice interpreting the various tests we cover: typically people who do this perform very well in the exam!

See the **sample exam paper**, which will be up on [Study Direct](#) and the [website](#), for an example of the exam format and the type of answers you will be expected to give.

## More assessment information

A variety of assessment modes are used to develop and test different types of knowledge, skills and aptitudes. The assessment modes have been approved to test the course and module learning outcomes. Written submissions usually form an integral part of assessment at all levels. Written submissions include essays, reports, logs etc. as appropriate to the module and the skills that you are being expected to develop. Examinations usually focus more on your ability to use your knowledge of the subject, rather than simply testing your memory for facts. Feedback is provided to support you in future assessments.

Unseen examinations are typically used to assess your level of knowledge and/or understanding of the discipline without the support of textbooks, notes or internet resources, unless these have been specifically permitted by the examination rubric. For students registered with the Student Support Unit an alternative mode may be approved as a Reasonable adjustment with the Student Support Unit.

However, when, in accordance with the academic judgement of the School, where an unseen exam has been approved for a module to assess competence standards, learning outcomes

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<sup>i</sup> From the regulations: 'Students are allowed to use any of the following non-programmable CASIO calculators: fx50 fx82, fx83, fx85, fx115, fx350, fx365 fx570 and fx-991 (all with any suffix).' (p. 36)

[https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=examination-and-assessment-regulations-handbook-2016-17-\(final\)docx.pdf&site=457](https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=examination-and-assessment-regulations-handbook-2016-17-(final)docx.pdf&site=457)

and any accreditation requirements, an alternative mode may not be approved as a Reasonable Adjustment for a student registered with the Student Support Unit. If you have any concerns, please discuss these with the Student Support Unit, who will liaise with the school.

### **Re-sits**

For those who need to re-sit to pass the module, the re-sit for **coursework** is an exercise in which you must attempt one of two tasks in analysis and data interpretation, corresponding to the factor analysis and coding assignments. Specifically, you will either complete a 'Results' section of a study based on some SPSS output or you will do part of a coding/reliability exercise.

### **Research participation (C8300 only)**

Students on the undergraduate version of the module (C8300) have to complete a certain amount of research participation to gain some of your coursework credits. You will need to collect 2 hours of course credits for this module, over the course of this term. You will receive **no marks** at all for doing anything less than the full amount of required hours. (If you are studying abroad for part of the year, your credit quota may be different; please check with your tutor.)

The main way that you will be notified about studies is through a computerised research participation management system called SONA. You can find details about this and everything else you need to know about the Research Participation Scheme here:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/internal/students/researchparticipationscheme/sonasystem>

## **Attendance, absence and engagement**

You are expected to be 'in attendance' at the University for the full duration of the published term dates for your course of study. That means you should be regularly attending lectures, seminars, labs etc. and committing time to your studies to be in a position to comply with academic and administrative expectations.

**The university has an 80% attendance policy in place, so it's really important that you let us know if you are ill or cannot attend classes so that we can register this as a notified absence.**

**If you are unable to attend your seminars or workshops, you need to send an email to [psychologyabsence@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:psychologyabsence@sussex.ac.uk) setting out the following information:**

- Seminar(s) / workshop(s) that you will be absent from (list all of them)
- Tutor name
- Brief reason for absence

**Please see the following link for further information:**

**<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/internal/students/attendance>**

## **Student evaluation**

The module convenor will create opportunities for you to provide feedback (online, on paper, and/or in person) on your experience of the module during the term. In addition, you will be asked to complete an online course evaluation questionnaire at the end of every term, and this will provide an opportunity for you to comment on each module as well as the course overall.

**John Drury, November 2016 (with acknowledgements to Andy Field, 2009)**