



Course evaluation template

After the course has ended, the course leader must fill in this template. The program director and education management will use your reflections to make adaptations to the program and/or the next time the course is given. The reflections will also be posted on the program web for students to read.

Course code 5HD005/ 2QA357	Course title Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods in Disasters	Credits 7.5 hp
Semester VT25	Period 2025-05-05 – 2025-06-08	

Course leader Dell Saulnier	Examiner Dell Saulnier
Other participating teachers	Other participating teachers

Number of registered students 5HD005: 21 2QA357: 11	Number who have not completed the course¹ 5HD005: 0 2QA357: 5	Number passed after regular session² 5HD005: 21 2QA357: 6
Methods for student influence other than course survey³ <p>The students had prompt access to Canvas before the course started which included the schedule, reading lists, and overview of the course content. On the first day of the course, I introduced the learning objectives and how they would be fulfilled, the assignments and exams and how they would be graded, plagiarism and the use of AI in the course, the different activities and teaching methods for the course content, and the schedule. The students had time during this session to talk about their expectations and questions or comments on suggested changes. Students were also told that myself, the course coordinator, and the student representatives and counsellor were available for feedback, questions, and suggestions. The program representative had spoken to the group just prior to the course starting.</p> <p>During the course, I regularly requested feedback from the students on what they enjoyed or did not appreciate about the lectures and activities, and any changes they would have liked to see. After the final exam, I scheduled an open session for students to drop in and discuss the course as a whole and what improvements or suggestions they had for next year, since this was the first year of the course. They were also free to give feedback on the content, objectives, educational support and assignments, as well. Three students joined to give feedback, although I suspect the low turnout was because we scheduled the session after lunch after their exam on the same morning and many were leaving the country the day after. 14 out of the 36 students answered the online course evaluation.</p>		

¹ At the time of completed grading and mandatory assignments/revisions.

² After first summative examination.

³ State: how the students were given the opportunity to participate in the preparation and decisions at course level, how the students were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the course and how this forms the basis of the analysis and proposals below, response frequency (for example, concluding survey 70 % response frequency, post-it notes – improvement suggestions after the second course week 90 % response frequency, course council 85 % attendance).

Conclusions from the previous course evaluation

This was the first year we offered the course. The course was developed from feedback from students in earlier years of the Erasmus Mundus program about their desire for a more extensive methods component to the program. There are no previous evaluations.

Description of conducted changes since previous course occasion

Not applicable.

Summary of the students' response to the course evaluation

From the online evaluation, overall, the students appear to be satisfied with what they have learned and the extent of their learning during the course. Most felt that, to a large or very large extent, they had developed valuable expertise or skills during the course (10/14 respondents), had acquired relevant practical skills (11/14 respondents), had acquired relevant theoretical knowledge (12/14 respondents) and achieved all the intended learning outcomes (10/14 respondents). Most also thought there was a common theme running through the course to a large or very large extent (11/14 respondents) and thought that the course promoted scientific thinking and reasoning to a large or very large extent (12/14 respondents). From the written course evaluation feedback and the in-person feedback session, the students really enjoyed the practical, hands-on exercises and assignments really appreciated the detailed feedback on their written assignments to help them learn.

However, there were more outliers in responses on the way the course was structured, which suggests some dissatisfaction. While at least 9 or more respondents said that each question was achieved to a large or very extent, these questions were the only ones to have students say the question had been met to a small or very small extent. Two respondents felt that the course was only designed to a small extent to meet the learning outcomes. One respondent felt that, to a very small extent, the exams and tests were designed for the learning outcomes and the workload was reasonable. Most of the dissatisfaction seems to be with overlap in the course content, the amount of content on evaluations compared to the time allocated to evaluations, and with confusion around the assignments:

“At some points, same topics were taught by different people using different strategies and different principles. It was kinda confusing.”

“Also I think there were some misunderstandings with some assignments on what we are supposed to include and what not. Some things were mentioned verbally in class and some people got confused along the way”

One response felt that the teacher was open to ideas and opinions and also that the teacher was able to support learning only to a small extent. Unfortunately, there was no written feedback in the course evaluation related to this point and it wasn't mentioned in the in-person feedback session.

Overall, the feedback for the course was very positive. For example: *“The professors were amazing and the class very interactive and easy to keep up with. I am glad we took this course and I might not have become an expert but it did make me much more interested and gave me an idea of research and evaluation. It was great having assignments instead of exams. Thank you to all the professors!”*

The course leader's reflections on the implementation and results of the course

All the students in the course are part of the Erasmus Mundus program at KI and had been studying together for a year by the time the course started. Most of the freestanding students had also taken the earlier freestanding courses in the Erasmus program at KI, so almost all the students knew each other. Most had no experience with qualitative research or evaluations, which was expected and taken into consideration while developing the course, for example by using multiple practical, hands-on sessions and through the individual assignments which were designed for students to practice techniques they learned in class. For those students who had experience, I regularly asked them to contribute their knowledge and experience as examples in class discussion (if they agreed) and they often agreed to act as exemplars in the practical exercises, which kept them engaged.

The work methods in the course were all aimed at achieving the learning objectives through in-person lectures (and occasional online lectures, when scheduling required it), multiple practical in-person group exercises, four individual assignments on qualitative research, and a final written exam on evaluations. The course was split into 3 weeks on qualitative research and 1.5 weeks on evaluations. The students mentioned that they would have liked more than one day between the last day of evaluations content and the final exam. Overall, they said that the balance between the research and evaluations worked, but that the amount of content in the evaluations section was too much for 1.5 weeks, especially as we followed the recommendation to only meet in-person three days a week. Also, the content sometimes overlapped (e.g. sampling, ethics) which seems to have led to some confusion on the differences between research and evaluations. For ethics, they did not find the sessions very useful due to overlap in content, repetition of basic ideas, and little insight into how to apply the ideas in practice. This should be addressed next year (suggestions in the following section).

The students really liked the practical exercises and found them useful, as well as the detailed, individual feedback I gave them on their assignments. They wanted more practice on data analysis, which some found difficult to do using the short interviews they conducted (see section below). This was also difficult for them because the interview assignment instructions were not clear enough, so some students conducted two interviews on different topics rather than a single topic, which made analyzing the two interviews together impossible. In my own opinion, I also felt I did not spend enough time showing the analysis process and that was reflected in the assignments. This should be adjusted for next year. The students were also explicitly asked to use generative AI in some of the assignments to respond to sample questions. I realized that the students were not advanced enough yet to see how superficial the responses were, which meant the assignment did not have the same impact I had been hoping for. Next year, this could be adjusted through peer grading (see below).

The final grade was based on four qualitative research assignments (60% of grade) and a written final exam on evaluations only (40% of grade). The four assignments were:

1. Writing and revising a ten-question topic guide for a fictional project on health in humanitarian settings, which was designed to get students to teach students how to write questions that address a particular topic and to reflect on different interpretations of the same question and how it can affect data collection.

2. Conducting and transcribing two 30-minute interviews on a neutral topic, to let students independently test and reflect on the process of conducting interviews and understand the process of data transcription and its impact on data analysis.
3. Analyzing the two interviews and summarizing the results of their analysis in table and written format, to understand the process of analysis and practice turning data into written findings.
4. Reflect on the ethical issues of a published article on mental health in conflict settings, so students can recognize and consider the unique ethical challenges in disaster settings.

The four assignments required them to reflect on topics learned in class, such as qualitative sampling and how it impacts the results, and apply their skills practically. The final exam was a proctored written exam including a fictional evaluation scenario and multiple choice and open-ended questions on how the evaluation should be conducted. Both the assignments and the exam were designed in relation to the learning objectives, to getting them to describe, assess, interpret and explain methods related to disasters.

Course leader's conclusions and suggestions for improvement

Overall, the course ran well and the students were engaged with the material and appreciative of the content. However, there are clear areas of improvement for next year. Suggestions from myself and the students include:

- Rethink the amount of time allocated to qualitative research and evaluations. This could include adding a few self-study days prior to the exam, having more in-person classes or introducing more self-learning prior to in-person days if we want to keep face-to-face contact to three days a week. In addition, consider paring down the evaluations section to remove overlapping content where possible, such as focusing on indicators and team composition. This would require more in-depth cross planning by the course leaders and lecturers.
- Specifically focus on the practical application of ethics and avoid repetition of basic research ethics, which was added by multiple lecturers. One way to achieve this would be to assign background reading on basic research ethics and assign a published paper on health in a disaster setting that would be discussed in a short seminar, and then have a lecture on hands-on ethics, such as ethics applications, practicing taking informed consent, how to protect privacy and confidentiality, and group discussions on real ethical case studies during research and evaluations. The ethics session should be moved to the start of the course.
- The four assignments could be slightly restructured to improve their usefulness to the students. The four assignments should all be part of a single 'mini study' that each student carries out on a neutral topic (e.g. differences in education systems in the Erasmus program). The changes would include: 1) each student developing a topic guide for their own research question rather than making a topic guide on a fictional disaster research project, 2) making sure the students' two interviews are conducted on the same topic, and 3) writing a 1-page consent form for their own study instead of submitting an assignment on ethical reflections.
- Allocate more time to the difference between types of topic guides, practical considerations during data collection, and transcription.
- Expand the session on data analysis to focus less on the theory in-person (detailed descriptions to be assigned as course reading) and instead focus more on the hands-on process, such as showing inductive and deductive codes from a text extract,

walking through the process of arranging codes into categories, showing a page of text with codes, etc.

- Rather than having AI answer the students' topic guide questions, a possible modification would be for students to respond to each other's guide questions in class. This would provide more realistic answers than AI and more opportunity to discuss the depth of the replies and wording choices together in person.

Other comments

The evaluations will be shared with the research group and Erasmus program coordinators at the department to plan for next year and take stock of what worked and what didn't. The course will also be discussed with the Erasmus student representative to follow up on suggestions and feedback from the students to check what would be desired and/or feasible to implement next year.