



Master of Education in Open, Digital, and Distance Education (MDDE) 702

Qualitative Research Methods (Revision 2)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Grouped study . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Distance Education

Prerequisites:

MDDE 700

Precluded:

None

Faculty:

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Notes:

MEd program students must complete MDDE601 & MDDE602 prior to all other courses.

Overview

MDDE 702: Qualitative Research Methods is the second of four required courses in the thesis program route. The course focuses on the knowledge and skills that a distance education researcher or practitioner must possess in order to interpret the results of qualitative investigations as reported in the distance education and social science literature, as well as to conduct such investigations in their thesis research. Such knowledge and skills are essential preparation for graduate students who will be making decisions about methodology while developing their thesis proposals and conducting data analyses during their thesis research. The computer-based data analysis tool, nVivo, will be used to carry out course-related exercises and to prepare students for the analysis of qualitative data in their future thesis research.

All students taking the thesis route in the M.Ed. (Distance Education) program must successfully complete MDDE 700 before they can register in MDDE 702.

Students who successfully complete MDDE 702, but who opt to pursue the course-based route, will be granted three elective credits.

Outline

The course is divided into the following units:

- **Unit 1** - Introduction
- **Unit 2** - Designing a Qualitative Study
- **Unit 3** - Data Analysis and Representation
- **Unit 4** - Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry
- **Unit 5** - Introducing, focusing and writing a Qualitative Study
- **Unit 6** - Philosophical, Paradigm and Interpretive Frameworks

Learning outcomes

The goals of this course are to provide students with the concepts and skills required to interpret and evaluate the results of research in the social sciences and distance education literature, and to acquire an effective set of advanced computer-based, data analysis skills for their future thesis endeavors.

Evaluation

Students will be assessed on a Pass/Fail for each assignment and for the final grade. The assignments are briefly described below.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1 is an N-Vivo coding and qualitative analysis project	Pass/Fail
Assignment 2 is a paper discussing appropriate methodologies for your future research.	Pass/Fail

Note: Changes to assignments may be made from time to time by individual instructors.

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.

Other Resources

Online Study Guide

N-Vivo software (key emailed to students one week before official start date).

Important links

› [Course schedule](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Updated October 10, 2025

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