



COURSE OUTLINE

SCI110

Science Research Methods

School: School of Science, Technology and Engineering

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast	BLENDED LEARNING	Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.
UniSC Moreton Bay		
UniSC Adelaide		
Online	ONLINE	You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

The course introduces you to the essential components of scientific research design and statistical methods that can be used to summarise, analyse and interpret scientific data. Practical examples across all of the scientific disciplines are used in learning materials and tutorials.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Readings from textbook, watching screencast recordings, and completing associated activities	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – On-campus tutorial	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Seminar – Course introduction and overview; opportunity for students to ask any questions about the course organisation, materials, etc.	1hr	Orientation week	Once Only
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Readings from textbook, watching screencast recordings, and completing associated activities	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Online Zoom tutorial	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
Seminar – Course introduction and overview; opportunity for students to ask any questions about the course organisation, materials, etc.	1hr	Orientation week	Once Only

1.3. Course Topics

- Quantitative research questions: Population, Outcome, Comparison/Connection, Intervention.
- Design features of quantitative observational and experimental studies:
 - External validity: random and non-random sampling;
 - Internal validity, including Hawthorne effect, observer effect, units of observation and units of analysis, etc.
- Data collection, including the use of protocols.
- Data descriptions: Nominal and ordinal qualitative data; discrete and continuous data.
- Graphical analyses, including bar charts, pie charts, histograms, stem-and-leaf plots, dot plots, side-by-side bar charts, stacked bar charts, boxplots, error bar charts and scatterplots.
- Numerical analyses, including medians, means, standard deviations, IQRs, percentages, odds, odds ratios, correlations, simple linear relationships.
- Statistical analyses:
 - Confidence intervals: for one mean, one proportion, a mean difference, a difference between means, the odds ratio, regression parameters;
 - Hypothesis tests: one-sample *t*-tests, one sample proportion test, paired sample *t*-tests, two sample *t*-test, chi-square tests of independence, correlation, *t*-tests for regression parameters.
- Normal distributions, the 68-95-99.7 rule, and *z*-scores.
- Basic probability and independence.
- The language of research and statistics.
- Ethics in planning, interpreting and reporting the results of quantitative studies, including academic integrity and ecological validity.
- Reading and writing research.

2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1	Develop quantitative research questions and testable hypotheses.	Empowered
2	Design quantitative studies to answer simple scientific research questions.	Empowered
3	Select and produce the appropriate graphical, numerical and statistical analyses.	Knowledgeable
4	Select, apply and interpret the results of the appropriate statistical technique to analyse scientific data.	Empowered
5	Comprehend, apply, and communicate in the language of research and statistics.	Knowledgeable Empowered
6	Demonstrate professional integrity in planning, interpreting and reporting the results of quantitative studies.	Ethical

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

SCI201 or CPH261

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Basic mathematical skills are assumed.

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Early feedback is provided through Revision Quiz 1.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Quiz/zes	Individual	20%	N/A	Refer to Format	Online Submission
All	2a	Plan	Group	20%	Completed Pro Forma based around approved research question	Week 5	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2b	Report	Group	20%	Recommended max. of 26 slides (plus required software output)	Week 11	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Examination - Centrally Scheduled	Individual	40%	Two hours	Exam Period	Online Test (Quiz)

All - Assessment Task 1: Revision Quizzes

GOAL:	To enable you to practice the skills and revise the content studied each week in directed study activities.	
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes	
FORMAT:	<p>Submit online on indicated days throughout the teaching period.</p> <p>Four quizzes across the teaching period: Teaching Weeks 3, 6, 9, 12.</p> <p>Complete the quizzes in your own time.</p> <p>Each quiz is worth 5%.</p>	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Design appropriate scientific studies to answer simple scientific research questions.	1
	2 Select and apply the correct statistical technique to analyse scientific data	2
	3 Select, apply and interpret the results of the appropriate statistical technique to analyse scientific data	3
	4 Comprehend, apply, and communicate in the language of research and statistics (including using graphical and numerical information)	4
	5 Demonstrate professional integrity in planning, interpreting and reporting the results of scientific studies	5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Information literacy	
All - Assessment Task 2a: Project		
GOAL:	To enable you to engage with the planning stages of the scientific research process, include planning and design	
PRODUCT:	Plan	
FORMAT:	<p>Completed Pro Forma (based around approved research question) articulating your project plan and design.</p> <p>Further details will be available on Canvas.</p> <p>This Task should be completed in your own time. Your group members should, as far as possible, belong to the same tutorial.</p>	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Ability to develop research questions	1
	2 Ability to design scientific studies to answer simple scientific research questions.	2
	3 Select and produce the appropriate graphical, numerical and statistical analyses	3
	4 Comprehend, apply, and communicate in the language of research and statistics	4
	5 Demonstrate professional integrity in planning the results of scientific studies	5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation	

All - Assessment Task 2b: Project

GOAL:	To enable you to engage with all stages of the scientific research process, include planning, design, data collection, data summarising, data analysis, and reporting.	
PRODUCT:	Report	
FORMAT:	<p>A Report (as a set of PowerPoint slides) reporting on your project.</p> <p>Further details will be available on Canvas.</p> <p>This Task should be completed in your own time. Your group members should, as far as possible, belong to the same tutorial.</p>	
CRITERIA:		
	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Develop research questions and testable hypotheses	1
	2 Design scientific studies to answer simple scientific research questions.	2
	3 Select and produce the appropriate graphical, numerical and statistical analyses	3
	4 Select, apply and interpret the results of the appropriate statistical technique to analyse scientific data	4
	5 Comprehend, apply, and communicate in the language of research and statistics	5
	6 Demonstrate professional integrity in planning, interpreting and reporting the results of scientific studies.	6
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy	

All - Assessment Task 3: Final examination

GOAL:	To review and consolidate all of the key content in the course.	
PRODUCT:	Examination - Centrally Scheduled	
FORMAT:	<p>Multiple choice examination questions.</p> <p>Your examination will be open book: any materials are permitted.</p> <p>Any calculator is permitted.</p>	
CRITERIA:		
	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1 Write research questions and testable hypotheses	1
	2 Design appropriate scientific studies to answer simple scientific research questions.	2
	3 Select and apply the correct statistical technique to analyse scientific data	4
	4 Comprehend, apply, and communicate in the language of research and statistics (including using graphical and numerical information)	5
	5 Show professional integrity in planning, interpreting and reporting the results of scientific studies	6
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy	

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site—Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	P. K. Dunn	2024	Scientific Research Methods: Tutorials	Semester 1	Online (free) or PDF download (free)
Required	P. K. Dunn	2024	Scientific Research and Methodology: An introduction to quantitative research and statistics in science, engineering and health	n/a	Online (free). Hardcopy and PDF download may be available.

8.2. Specific requirements

You *may* need access to a calculator with statistical functionality. Examples include, but are not limited to: Casio FX100AU Scientific Calculator; Casio FX82 AU PLUS-BP Scientific Calculator; Sharp EL531WHBLK Scientific Calculator.

You need access to statistical software, such as jamovi (recommended) or IBM SPSS Statistics (commonly called SPSS). You only need access to *one* of these programs.

* jamovi is available as a free download from <https://www.jamovi.org/>. We advise downloading the solid version (rather than the current version) as it is likely to be more stable.

* SPSS is available in most USC computer laboratories, and through USCAnywhere (anywhere.usc.edu.au) from any internet-enabled device. You do not need to purchase SPSS.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](#) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](#) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](#) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10.General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au