Consultation Guide Form

Qualitative Example

1. Please state your research question(s) in one or two concise sentences.
How do students, who identify as "working-class", experience attending Mount Holyoke College?

2. Please identify how you will be collecting your data. Be clear in your description. For example, will you be using Likert scale questions, observational counts, interviews, open-ended survey questions, or something else?

I intend on conducting two one-hour interview sessions with approximately seven students. My interview schedule will be semi-structured to allow the conversation to be directed primarily from what the participants share about their experiences during the interview. It is my intention to record the interviews and transcribe them for analysis.

3. Your research question informs the type of data collection and data analysis that you will be performing. It sets the foundation for your entire study. A poorly-formed research question will yield poor results. Check with your faculty advisor to ensure that your research question aligns with the way that you are planning to collect your data.

In the space below, please explain why you believe the structure of your research question warrants the type of data collection strategy you intend to employ.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how participants experience their time at Mount Holyoke, it is necessary for me to gather data from first-person reports. I could send out an open-ended questionnaire, but I feel that it wouldn't provide me with the same rich-descriptive data that I could gather during an interview. In addition, if I collect my data using an interview it will grant me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to my participants to ensure that I understand their experiences in enough detail to write a detailed-report of the findings.

4. If you are conducting quantitative research, please articulate your research hypothesis below, then identify the statistical test that you will be using to test whether your hypothesis is supported (e.g., t-test, repeated measures ANOVA). If you are conducting a mixed methods study, please explain the quantitative aspect of it below. SKIPPED b/c my study is qualitative.

5. If you are conducting qualitative research, please state the method of analysis that you will be using (e.g., grounded theory, thematic analysis, phenomenology, case study) AND state why you believe this method is appropriate. If you are conducting a mixed methods study, please explain the qualitative aspect of it below.
I intend on using phenomenological analysis to analyze my data. Since my research question is interested in understanding how students experience Mount Holyoke, this method is appropriate as its primary focus is on understanding how people make meaning from their lived experiences.

6. In the space below please describe the issue for which you are seeking consultation. Feel free to continue on another sheet of paper, if necessary.

I heard that grounded theory is the standard method people use when dealing with qualitative data. I think that phenomenology is more appropriate for my research question, but I wanted to review some of the similarities and differences between these two methods with you before launching into my project.

Consultation Guide Form

Quantitative Example

1. Please state your research question(s) in one or two concise sentences.
Do Mount Holyoke College alumnae and Smith College alumnae differ in their mean college satisfaction ratings ten years after attending college?

2. Please identify how you will be collecting your data. Be clear in your description. For example, will you be using Likert scale questions, observational counts, interviews, open-ended survey questions, or something else?

I will be using a survey to collect the data. The survey has a number of Likert scale questions on it, which I will use to calculate a composite score for the overall college satisfaction rating of each participant. I plan on recruiting participants using the alumnae directories provided by each college.

3. Your research question informs the type of data collection and data analysis that you will be performing. It sets the foundation for your entire study. A poorly-formed research question will yield poor results. Check with your faculty advisor to ensure that your research question aligns with the way that you are planning to collect your data.

In the space below, please explain why you believe the structure of your research question warrants the type of data collection strategy you intend to employ.

Since I am interested in comparing the mean differences between two groups, it is appropriate for me to collect numerical data from my participants. Collecting the data from a survey I will have one nominal grouping variable, which is the college that alumnae attended—either Smith or Mount Holyoke. And I will have a numerical dependent variable, which is the satisfaction rating that I will get from my composite score.

4. If you are conducting quantitative research, please articulate your research hypothesis below, then identify the statistical test that you will be using to test whether your hypothesis is supported (e.g., t-test, repeated measures ANOVA). If you are conducting a mixed methods study, please explain the quantitative aspect of it below.
I have a nondirectional research hypothesis: There will be a mean difference in the satisfaction ratings between the alumnae from Mount Holyoke and Smith College.

I plan to use an independent-samples t-test to analyze my findings.

5. If you are conducting qualitative research, please state the method of analysis that you will be using (e.g., grounded theory, thematic analysis, phenomenology, case study) AND state why you believe this method is appropriate. If you are conducting a mixed methods study, please explain the qualitative aspect of it below.
SKIPPED b/c my study is quantitative.

6. In the space below please describe the issue for which you are seeking consultation. Feel free to continue on another sheet of paper, if necessary.

I am planning on generating the composite score for my dependent variable (College Satisfaction rating) using the data that I receive from my survey. However, this score will be discrete. I learned in stats that my dependent variable should be continuous in nature. Is it appropriate to treat likert-scale data as continuous? Am I violating an assumption of the independent-samples t –test?