

RESEARCH — EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

Research Methods Briefing

The method, and how it will be defended

DOCUMENT	PREPARED	OWNER	PAGES	STATUS
RMB-27-023	April 2027	Research	6	Illustrative sample

The read

The method answers a different question from the one in the title. The title asks why and the method measures how many, which produces a description rather than an explanation — and the marking criteria reward explanation.

I Research question	I Method chosen	O Alignment between them	6 wks Before data collection starts
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SOUND

- 01 Sample size and recruitment.
- 02 Ethics position.
- 03 Analysis plan for the data it would collect.

NOT SOUND

- 01 The method answers a descriptive question.
- 02 The title asks an explanatory one.



Where the marks are, and where the work is thinnest.

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SO WHAT

There is nothing wrong with the method and nothing wrong with the question. They are answering different things, and six weeks is enough to align them.

The mismatch

QUESTION AGAINST METHOD

ELEMENT	WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT NEEDS
Title	Why do consumers X	An explanatory method
Method	A structured survey	Produces frequencies, not reasons
Analysis	Descriptive statistics	Describes, does not explain
Marking criteria	Rewards explanation	Currently unmet

TWO WAYS TO ALIGN

Change the question	Ask how many rather than why — the method already fits
Change the method	Interviews or mixed method — the question already fits
Which is cheaper	Changing the question, at six weeks out
Which is stronger	Changing the method, if time allows
Not assessed	Whether the supervisor would approve a method change at this stage

SO WHAT Both routes are legitimate and only one is cheap at six weeks. Which to take is a supervisor conversation, and it should happen this week rather than after collection.



Assessed on process, presented as outcome. The gap between those two is what most of this document is about.

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Defending it

WHAT WILL BE ASKED

Why this method	Have an answer that is not 'it was practical'
What it cannot show	Every method has limits; naming them is a strength
Why not the alternative	Shows you considered one
What you would do differently	Not a trap — it is the question that separates grades
Sample	Whether it supports the claim, not whether it is large

SEQUENCE

THIS WEEK	Take it to the supervisor Before collection, not after.
+ 2 WKS	Rewrite the methods chapter to match Whichever way it aligns.
+ 6 WKS	Begin collection Against a method that answers the question.

SO WHAT	Naming what a method cannot show is a strength in a viva and a weakness only when it is discovered by the examiner. Writing the limits into the chapter is the whole defence.
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Decisions

DECISIONS ARISING FROM THIS BRIEFING

DECISION	OWNER	BY	IF IT IS NOT TAKEN
Take the mismatch to the supervisor this week	Student	This week	Data is collected against the wrong question
Decide whether the question or the method changes	Student	+2 weeks	Both stay misaligned
Write the limits of the method into the chapter	Student	+4 weeks	They are raised by the examiner instead
Do not begin collection until they align	Student	Now	Six weeks of collection answer nothing

SOURCES AND BASIS

Research question and method — the proposal as submitted.
Marking criteria — the published criteria for this unit.
Timeline — the published assessment calendar.

ILLUSTRATIVE SAMPLE

This document is a rendered SAMPLE of the Research Methods Briefing template, produced to show its structure, exhibit inventory and register. The figures in it are illustrative and are not market intelligence. A real run of this template researches and cites its figures with an as-of year for each, or marks them as modelled and states the basis — the rule the template itself carries.