SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) - A Generic Introduction

Short Session Descriptor

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is a powerful statistical analysis and data management tool that uses an intuitive graphical environment. Recommended for Year 1 postgraduate researchers.

Longer Session Description

COURSE AIMS

SPSS is a powerful statistical analysis and data management tool that uses an intuitive graphical environment. In addition to this, SPSS also provides a data viewer (a spreadsheet-like screen for entering, editing and viewing data), a variable viewer (a user-friendly screen in which variables and their properties can be created and edited) and an output viewer (a graphical, object orientated facility for manipulating output, for example, charts and tables).

INTENDED AUDIENCE

Recommended for Year 1 postgraduate researchers.

COURSE CONTENT

The aim of this session is to outline the functionality that exists within SPSS, and, as such, will take on a largely demonstrative format with opportunity for hands-on experience. It is hoped that researchers will gain sufficient knowledge of the package to ascertain whether they require further training, or indeed whether SPSS will meet their requirements at all.

This session examines the features of the software and aims to act as an introduction to using SPSS. No prior knowledge of SPSS is required to attend this session, although an understanding of file management is assumed.

In addition to the SPSS coverage, this session will discuss fundamental concepts involved in quantitative data analysis, clarifying the implications for research design and subsequent data analysis using SPSS.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course you will understand:

- the concepts of variance, statistical significance and the normal distribution, and how they impact on research design
- the different forms of descriptive statistics
- the basic functionality of SPSS
- the importance of correct and careful research design, variable planning and setup, including coding user- and system-missing values, as well as entering, editing and restructuring data

You can access all necessary materials for SPSS from the ELE page: http://vle.exeter.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1619

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER DOCTORAL COLLEGE TRAINING THEMES:

Our PGR and ECR training activities are currently mapped to the national, RCUK-endorsed, Vitae Researcher Development Framework and will continue to be so to address national agendas. However, in response to PGR, ECR and academic feedback, and, consequently, to demonstrate clear links between provision and needs, our training activities are also informed by and mapped to six, non-discrete, main themes. The themes are: ‘Planning Research’ – eg: identifying and securing research partners (including, for example, collaboration and networking skills), writing proposals and applying for funding; ‘Doing Research’ – ie disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and more generic research methods, methodology, and related training; ‘Disseminating Research’ – ie writing journal articles, books, and reports, and presentation skills; ‘Teaching’; ‘Employability’; and ‘Wellbeing’

The main theme for this course is: ‘Doing Research’

RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (RDF) https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework/developing-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework

The RDF is a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. It articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of researchers and encourages them to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development.

This course links most explicitly to RDF sub-domain A2

PRESENTER INFORMATION

This session is delivered by Dr Cris Burgess, an expert SPSS user.