Michaelmas Term main programme sessions aim to introduce the nature, key issues and terminology employed in educational research. There is an examination of key concepts, the mechanics of research and the process of focusing your topic and defining and refining research questions. Sessions consider the assumptions underlying research, the grounds for fundamental beliefs and assumptions which underpin research, and provide an overview of some of the philosophical notions and concepts which predispose how we look at the world and the questions we ask about it.

Lent Term main programme sessions aim to examine methods and practices of collecting and analysing data within various traditions of enquiry. Multiple methodological practices will be examined with different tools and techniques for generating empirical materials represented.

Easter Term main programme sessions look at issues in relation to the writing process and production of a thesis, as well as explore data analysis techniques.

The course consists of two levels. Introductory Level sessions will offer a general introduction to different aspects of educational research. Intermediate Level sessions are divided into two types: (1) the compulsory main programme of study sessions will offer further elements focused on the foundations of educational research theory and practice; (2) the elective sessions will offer intermediate level topics built on the foundation sessions taught at Introductory Level. Students are required to take all Introductory and Intermediate main programme sessions and should select 11 of the elective elements of the programme. The elective sessions are intended to facilitate students’ depth of understanding and application of approaches appropriate to their proposed lines of enquiry. The course has been designed to allow students intending to undertake a particular mode of enquiry to focus more attention on their preferred methods within a framework that still ensures a broad and balanced coverage.

The course elements are all designed to facilitate students’ undertaking and reporting, by means of a thesis, a small-scale research study on a topic of their choice. The study will normally relate to the Faculty’s research interests and will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff. To ensure that applicants have thought carefully about the research questions they wish to explore in this study and that suitable supervision will be available for their proposed topic, a requirement for applying for the Educational Research route is submission of a 1,500 word research proposal. You will be asked for this when we receive your application but if you would like to see the guidelines before this, please email graduate@educ.cam.ac.uk