INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS

Synopsis
Students are expected to explore the following areas; introduction to methodology, history of general practice, scope and nature of general practice research, study designs, qualitative versus quantitative research, the epidemiology basis of general practice research, descriptive, observational and experimental studies, getting started, including literature surveys, critical appraisal of journal articles, research protocols, descriptive and inferential statistics, data analysis, questionnaire construction and survey techniques and writing papers and giving presentations on research.

The unit is designed to take a logical path from framing a researchable question to developing a plan, implementing it, obtaining and then analysing results, and finally writing the project up. Introductory concepts of statistical analysis will be included, but students will not be expected to have a detailed working knowledge of this difficult subject area.

Objectives
On completion of this unit students should be able to:

1. understand the nature and scope of research in general practice;
2. understand and be able to implement the methods used in answering questions that arise out of general practice;
3. critically appraise the medical literature;
4. develop an enthusiasm for doing your own research;
5. gain some practical experience in doing research projects.

Assessment
Students will be expected to complete 4 written assignments plus an MCQ