

Australian Standard™

Market and social research



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- Association of Market Research Organisations (AMRO)
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)
- Australian Marketing Institute (AMI)
- Government Communications Unit (GCU)
- Market Research Quality Assurance (MRQA)
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Australian Standard™

Market and social research

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Preface

This Standard was prepared by Standards Australia Committee MB-005, Market Research.

The objective of this Standard is to:

- establish minimum standards for market research;
- increase the internal efficiency of the market research process;
- increase the consistency of market research; and
- clarify the role of market research as credible and valid.

The driving organisation behind the development of this Standard was Market Research Quality Assurance Inc (MRQA). MRQA administers the Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) scheme which was established in 1991.

This Australian Standard is based on but not equivalent to the British Standard BS 7911:2003, *Specification for organisations conducting market research* and the EMRQS EFAMRO Market Research Quality Standards.

The terms ‘normative’ and ‘informative’ have been used to distinguish between prescriptive and non-prescriptive parts in the Standard respectively.

Guidance is provided in text boxes throughout the Standard.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword	v
1 Scope and general	
1.1 Scope	1
1.2 Guidance notes	1
1.3 Referenced documents	1
1.4 Terms and definitions	3
2 Systems structure and management	
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Organisation and responsibilities	15
2.3 Training, development and competencies	16
2.4 Documented systems	17
2.5 Project quality management system	20
2.6 Purchasing and subcontractor management	22
2.7 Maintenance of equipment	23
2.8 Reviewing the effectiveness of the quality management system	23
2.9 Internal audit requirements	24
3 Project management and reporting	
3.1 Introduction	26
3.2 Research proposals and price quotations	27
3.3 Research proposals and projects requiring research design	28
3.4 Review of proposed research design and methodology	35
3.5 Responding to a price quotation request	35
3.6 Prior to commissioning	36
3.7 Project schedule	37
3.8 Questionnaires and discussion guides	38
3.9 Prior to conducting fieldwork	39
3.10 Conducting fieldwork	40
3.11 Research analysis	41
3.12 Presentation of quantitative data	42
3.13 Checking of quantitative data	43
3.14 Reporting	43
3.15 Report review	45
3.16 Client property	46
3.17 Project records	46
3.18 Multi-national research	47
3.19 Internal audits	48

4	Data collection	
4.1	Introduction.....	49
4.2	Face-to-face interviewing.....	51
4.3	Telephone interviewing.....	66
4.4	Audits and observational studies	75
4.5	Recruitment for qualitative research.....	84
4.6	Self-completion and internet data collection.....	93
4.7	Internal audits.....	95
5	Data management and processing	
5.1	General.....	96
5.2	CATI or CAPI including online data collection.....	98
5.3	Hard copy data entry	99
5.4	Accuracy of databases not requiring data entry	100
5.5	Checking data against job specifications	100
5.6	Data editing.....	101
5.7	Data file management.....	101
5.8	Coding.....	102
5.9	Data analysis	104
5.10	Electronic Data Delivery	106
5.11	Back up, retention and security of data.....	107
5.12	Internal audits.....	108

Foreword

The development of this Standard has been driven by the shared desire of market research suppliers (companies and individual practitioners) and buyers to operate in an environment that is continually developing and improving.

This recognition of a need for quality assurance standards in the market research industry is not new. In 1991, the market research industry, including a number of major buyers, funded the development of *Interviewer Quality Control Australia* (IQCA) – a quality assurance scheme providing accreditation standards for market research data collection. This scheme assures buyers and users of market research that fieldwork practices conducted by an industry accredited Organisation are carried out in accordance with best industry practice. Since its inception, more than 100 companies throughout Australia have become IQCA accredited suppliers of fieldwork.

Internationally, the need for quality assurance standards in the market research industry is also evident, with several countries creating their own national standards (United Kingdom, France and Spain). European standards have also been written – the *EFAMRO Market Research Quality Standard* (EMRQS). EFAMRO have submitted a global market research standard to the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) authorities with a view to setting up a worldwide ISO Standard for market research. Every nation belonging to ISO has been asked to participate in this development. Australia is represented on the ISO/TC 225 Technical Committee undertaking the development of the ISO Standard for market research.

Following from the success of the IQCA industry accreditation scheme and the growing importance of quality assurance accreditation both nationally and internationally, much interest has been expressed in the availability of accreditation standards for all elements of the market research process. To this end, the Australian Standard has now been extended.

The MRQA Council approached Standards Australia to develop this market research standard (AS 4752)¹.

The Standard provides for the following areas of responsibility:

- Systems structure and management (Section 2)
- Project management and reporting (Section 3)
- Data collection (Section 4)
- Data management and processing (Section 5)

¹ Details of the certification process to this Standard are available from MRQA Executive Director c/- MRQA Inc Level 1, 3 Queen Street, Glebe, NSW 2037. Tel: 02 9571 1212 Fax: 02 9571 1210 email: mrqa@bigpond.com website: www.mrqa.com.au

This Standard specifies minimum service levels in each of these areas, which Organisations seeking assessment are required to meet.

For many of the requirements outlined, accompanying notes are provided to assist with interpretation and understanding of the particular requirement and the minimum service level.

Where relevant, this Standard provides precise instructions regarding how specific tasks are required to be undertaken and how individual procedures and processes are required to be audited. This prescriptive nature is particularly evident in Section 4: Data collection, in order to maintain consistency with the well-established IQCA industry accreditation scheme.

Other Sections provide requirements and, in some cases, guidance notes that allow the Organisation to ascertain the most appropriate means of meeting the requirements, i.e. appropriate to the Organisation's current systems and style.

Participation in this scheme is totally voluntary. However any Organisation making a statement of compliance with this Standard is advised to ensure that such compliance is capable of being verified.

In Section 2 (Systems structure and management), an Organisation may either comply with the relevant Section of this Standard, or comply with AS/NZS ISO 9001, *Quality management systems—Requirements*.

Section 3 (Project management and reporting) concentrates on the development, conduct and delivery of the research project by the Researcher. Any data collected by researchers, particularly via the use of qualitative techniques, is covered in this Section. Any collection of data via a field team is covered in Section 4, including recruitment.

Section 4 (Data collection) replicates the requirements of the *Interviewer Quality Control Australia* (IQCA) data collection standards. Organisations may continue to be accredited for data collection only, via the industry accreditation scheme.

Figure 1 shows the structure of the Standard in terms of the four (4) key Sections (Sections 2 – 5). The key concepts associated with each Section are also shown.

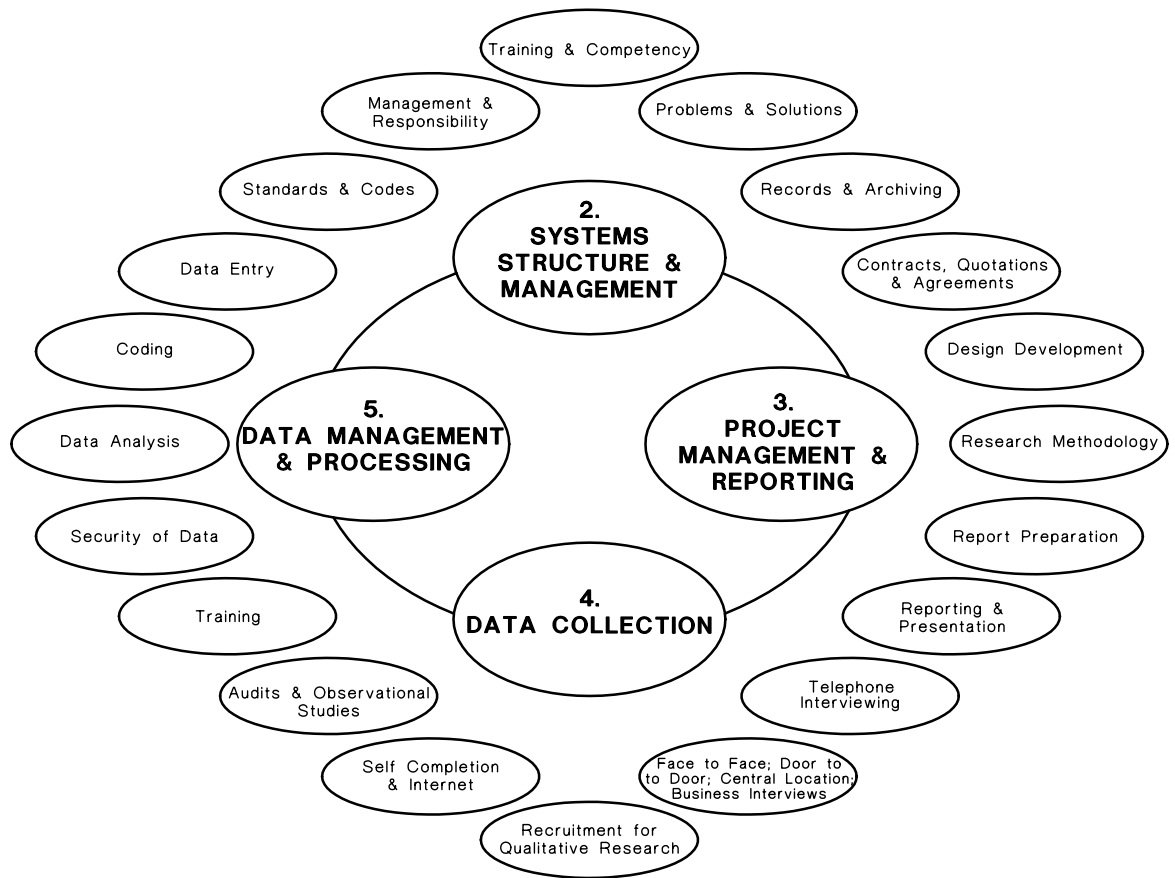


FIGURE 1 MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH STANDARD

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1 Scope and general

1.1 Scope

This Standard specifies service levels for systems, project management and reporting, data collection, data processing and coding to be applied in market and social research projects.

This Standard is applicable to Organisations and individual practitioners that supply market and social research services. It applies to all types of research projects and to all staff responsible for and working on research projects.

1.2 Guidance notes

Throughout this Standard there are statements in boxes which provide guidance to assist with understanding and implementation of the Standard.

1.3 Referenced documents

In applying this Australian Standard, the following normative referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this Standard. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies. Informative referenced documents are for information only.

1.3.1 Normative references

1.3.1.1 AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour

In 1995 the then Market Research Society of Australia (now Australian Market & Social Research Society AMSRS) adopted the revised ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice. The associated notes were adapted for Australian market and social research practice. This code covers: Responsibilities to Respondents; Researchers' Professional Responsibilities; and Researchers' and Clients' Mutual Rights and Responsibilities.

1.3.1.2 Privacy Act 1988 – Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000

The National Privacy Principles (NPPs) in the Privacy Act set out how private sector Organisations should collect, use, keep secure and disclose personal information. AMRO members are covered by the Market and Social Research Privacy Principles (M&SRPPs)

1.3.1.3 State Lottery and Gaming Legislation (Acts, Regulations and Codes by State)

When an incentive involves the conduct of a competition where a prize is awarded on the basis of chance, this is classified as a Trade Promotion. In accordance with State Lottery and Gaming Laws, a Trade Promotion and Lottery Licence will be required in the states where the competition is conducted. Refer to state legislative requirements.

1.3.1.4 Telecommunications (Interception) Act 1979

Any monitoring of telephone interviewing is required by law to conform with this Act.

1.3.2 Informative references

1.3.2.1 AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000, Quality management systems—Requirements

1.3.2.2 Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) fieldwork standard

The IQCA scheme, administered by Market Research Quality Assurance Inc (MRQA) is a Quality Assurance scheme established by the market research industry to ensure that the data collection procedures used by research companies will produce reliable, high quality results. This Standard covers four main categories of interviewing and fieldwork procedures: face-to-face interviewing (door-to-door interviews, central location interviews and business interviews); telephone interviewing; audits and observational studies and recruitment for qualitative research.

1.3.2.3 AMSRS Interviewer's Manual

This document was published by the AMSRS in 2001 and was jointly funded by the MRQA and AMSRS. The document was written by the Field Management Group (FMG), a subgroup of the AMSRS in Australia. The Interviewer's manual was compiled by the FMG to provide a standard reference for interviewers and to help establish a more uniform level of professionalism throughout the market research industry. This manual provides a comprehensive and structured overview of data collection fieldwork that can be used to train new interviewers.

1.3.2.4 AMSRS Supervisor's Manual

This document was published by the AMSRS in 2001 and was jointly funded by the MRQA and AMSRS. The document was written by the Field Management Group (FMG), a subgroup of the AMSRS in Australia. The Supervisor's Manual is a reference tool for Supervisor's and Field Managers and is designed to enhance learning for staff in the Australian market research industry.

1.3.2.5 AMSRS Recruiter's Manual

This edition of the Recruiter's Manual was written by the Qualitative Recruiters Group (QRG) of NSW and covers such topics as professionalising recruiters; new privacy legislation and developments in information technology that enable qualitative researchers to work more effectively. This manual provides a comprehensive and structured overview of qualitative recruitment that can be used to train new recruiters.

1.3.2.6 AMSRS Guidelines

AMSRS current guidelines relevant to the Organisation's research activities may also include the AMSRS Telemarketing Policy and any other policies and guidelines for research practice adopted or developed by the AMSRS.

1.3.2.7 ESOMAR Guidelines

ESOMAR published a series of guidelines pertaining to:

- (a) Guide to Opinion Polls.
- (b) Guidelines on Maintaining the Distinction between Market Research and Direct Marketing.
- (c) Guidelines for Interviewing Children.
- (d) Guidelines for Mystery Shopping.
- (e) Client Guidelines on Tape and Video Recording and Observation of Interviews and Groups.
- (f) Conducting Marketing and Opinion Research Using the Internet.
- (g) The Arbitration Service.

1.4 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

1.4.1 AMSRS Surveyline

An independent service provided to the public by the AMSRS for the purposes of verifying the bona fides of the Australian Market Research Agency members in the AMSRS National Directory and Yearbook.

1.4.2 Analyst

The person with overall responsibility for the project during data preparation and/or data processing stages.

1.4.3 Appraisal

The process of monitoring the competency of an individual in carrying out their work in accordance with the defined training plan and workplace or project instructions.

1.4.4 Assessor

Person or body that audits a quality system to establish compliance with a Standard such as this Standard or IQCA.

1.4.5 Audit

Systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are filled.

1.4.6 Audit and observation studies

A methodology for obtaining information (data) through observation of behaviour, actions or events, at a defined time or circumstance. This is an unobtrusive or non-reactive method of data collection with or without the knowledge of the participants e.g. mystery shopping studies.

1.4.7 Briefing

A meeting or other communication method undertaken to explain the requirements of the data collection process and the project brief to Interviewers/Moderators. This process is undertaken prior to fieldwork commencing and provides participants with the opportunity for two way communication.

1.4.8 Business interviews

A process of data collection where respondents are interviewed in their professional capacity and not as a member of the public.

1.4.9 CAPI

Data capture by means of computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).

1.4.10 CATI

Data capture by means of computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

1.4.11 Central location

(see also: 'Intercept')

A process of data collection that involves interviewing participants in designated public, community, private or government places. This process is also referred to as 'intercept interviewing'.

1.4.12 Client

An individual person, company or Organisation (or combination thereof) commissioning or contracting a market research project or parts of a project.

1.4.13 Clinics

(see also: 'Theatre test' or 'Hall test')

The process of pre-recruiting participants to be interviewed simultaneously at one location (e.g. cinema advertising testing, computer labs, car clinics).

1.4.14 Code

In the data entry and analysis processes, a numeric or alpha character, or combination of characters assigned to a predetermined answer for data entry into the computer.

1.4.15 Code frames

The outcome of grouping similar responses from open-ended questions into codes (see above 'Code') created through in-depth analysis of a proportion of responses.

1.4.16 Coding

The allocation of codes (alpha or numeric) into groups of similar responses in relation to open-ended questions.

1.4.17 Data collection

The process of collecting information that may be in the form of details, documents, facts, figures, input, materials or statistics for market research analysis.

1.4.18 Data cleaning

The correction of data records through editing to render them consistent with filters, filter questions and data logic.

1.4.19 Data entry

The input of market research information (data) into electronic format for data analysis. For more detailed definitions see 'Simple data entry' and 'Logic data entry'.

1.4.20 Data preparation

A general term covering coding, data entry, data editing and data cleaning that prepares data for analysis.

1.4.21 Data processing (DP)

The process of data preparation and analysis.

1.4.22 Data record

Data relating to the completed questionnaire or collected data of an individual respondent, item or transaction (i.e. reportable unit).

1.4.23 Document

Hard copy or electronic information or instruction provided in an appropriate support medium.

1.4.24 Door-to-door interviewing

A process of interviewing participants in their place of residence.

1.4.25 Editing

The process of comparison between actual and possible responses, as defined by the questionnaire structure and logic. The outcome may be that some responses are amended (see also 'Data cleaning').

1.4.26 Face-to-face interviewing

A process of interviewing participants when face-to-face with the participant.

1.4.27 Field Auditor

In data collection, an individual who, on behalf of the Organisation, is assigned at strategic locations to observe and record people's behaviour, actions or events at the time of their occurrence (see also 'Audits' and 'Observation').

1.4.28 Field Manager

A person in overall control of any field team (national or state).

1.4.29 Field Team

The sum total of Field Auditors/Interviewers/Recruiters undertaking data collection under the direct control of the Field Manager.

1.4.30 Frequency count

(see also: Hole count)

A term used to describe a summary count of individual data items on a computer file.

1.4.31 Group discussion

The process whereby a qualitative Researcher/Moderator facilitates discussion between two or more respondents.

1.4.32 Guidance

Statements in italics and shaded boxes which provide examples to assist with understanding and implementation of the Standard.

1.4.33 Hall test

(see also: 'Theatre test' or 'Clinics')

The process of pre-recruiting participants to be interviewed simultaneously at one location (e.g. cinema advertising testing, computer labs, car clinics).

1.4.34 Hole count

(see also: 'Frequency count')

A term used to describe a summary count of individual data items on a computer file.

1.4.35 In-depth interview

An interview that is not confined to a structured questionnaire.

1.4.36 Intercept

(see also: 'Central location')

A process of data collection that involves interviewing participants in designated public, community, private or government places. This process is also referred to as 'central location interviewing'.

1.4.37 Interviewer

An individual who works on behalf of an Organisation to recruit or interview respondents either by face-to-face or telephone techniques.

1.4.38 IQCA

A formal accreditation scheme known as Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) based on an agreed, documented set of data collection standards. Market Research Quality Assurance Inc. in Australia administers the IQCA scheme.

1.4.39 Logic data entry/Computer Assisted Data Entry (CADE)

This is a data entry process programmed to check question skips and response range checks. (see also 'Data entry' and 'Simple data entry')

1.4.40 Moderator

A competent trained person who facilitates the interaction of group discussions, analyses and compiles findings.

1.4.41 Monitoring

(see also: 'Remote listening')

In data collection, a method of validating the authenticity of responses and quality of interviewing in the telephone room by the Field Manager, Supervisor or Team Leader listening to both sides of an Interviewer's call.

1.4.42 Mystery shopping

(see also: ‘Shadow shopping’)

A process of data collection by Interviewers or Field Auditors acting as prospective customers without the knowledge of the person/s providing the information or service, where the collected data is used for the purposes of analysis.

1.4.43 Observation

A term used by the industry accreditation system referring to the appraisal by observation, of an Interviewer/Field Auditor or Recruiter. The purpose of the observation is to confirm Interviewer competency to undertake the category of interview in accordance with the industry accreditation standard.

1.4.44 Off-the-shelf product or methodology

A research product or methodology developed and made available to meet the needs of more than one Client e.g. syndicated research or proprietary research product.

1.4.45 Online data collection

Data captured by means of web/internet/email self-completion questionnaires.

1.4.46 Open-ended response

A type of question where respondents are asked to answer in their own words. This type of question usually requires probing and the answers are recorded verbatim.

1.4.47 Organisation

Entity or group involved in market or social research providing research services. This may range from a small boutique agency to a large multi-national company.

1.4.48 Price quotation

Response to a Client with the costs of implementing a research project to a predetermined methodology.

1.4.49 Procedure

Specified way to carry out an activity or a process.

1.4.50 Process

A system of activities which uses resources to transform inputs into outputs.

1.4.51 Project record

Record of activities and outcomes related to the agreed scope of a project and traceable to stages of activities throughout the project.

1.4.52 Proposal

(see also: 'Research proposal')

Response to Client enquiry for work which includes some element of research design.

1.4.53 Qualification

Combination of attributes, education, training, work and other experience attributing to competency and capability.

1.4.54 Quality

Ability of a set of inherent characteristics to fulfil stated or expected requirements as determined by a customer or other interested parties.

1.4.55 Quality assurance

That part of a quality management system focused on providing confidence that quality requirements are fulfilled.

1.4.56 Quality management system

A quality management system is that part of an Organisation's management system that focuses on the achievement of outputs (results) in relation to the quality objectives, to satisfy the needs, expectations and requirements of interested parties, as appropriate.

1.4.57 Questionnaire

Document used to collect answers to specific questions. This may be paper, electronic, online or video format.

1.4.58 Record

Evidence of activities performed or results achieved.

1.4.59 Recruiter (of respondents)

An individual who, on behalf of the Organisation, recruits respondents for in-depth interviews, group discussions, hall tests, theatre tests or clinics.

1.4.60 Remote listening

(see also: 'Monitoring')

In data collection, a method of validating the authenticity of responses and quality of interviewing in the telephone room by the Field Manager, Supervisor or Team Leader listening to both sides of an Interviewer's call.

1.4.61 Research proposal

(see also: 'Proposal')

Response to Client enquiry for work which includes some element of research design.

1.4.62 Research universe

The scope of population segment included in the survey.

1.4.63 Researcher

An individual responsible for managing, singly or jointly, a project or parts of a project.

1.4.64 Rural Interviewer

Interviewers engaged outside metropolitan areas and working remotely from metropolitan based supervisors.

1.4.65 Second person review

A review carried out by a second suitably competent individual to confirm the research objective can be met by the proposed design. Second person review may also apply to questionnaire design and code frame development.

1.4.66 Self-administered questionnaire

(see also: 'Self-completion questionnaire')

A data collection method where the individual completes a questionnaire without the help of an Interviewer.

1.4.67 Self-completion questionnaire

(see also: 'Self-administered questionnaire')

A data collection method where the individual completes a questionnaire without the help of an Interviewer.

1.4.68 Shadow shopping

(see also: 'Mystery shopping')

A process of data collection by Interviewers or Field Auditors acting as prospective customers without the knowledge of the person/s providing the information or service, where the collected data is used for the purposes of analysis.

1.4.69 Shall

Indicates that a statement is mandatory.

1.4.70 Should

Indicates a recommendation.

1.4.71 Simple data entry

Data entry process containing no in-built logic checks (see also 'Data entry' and 'Logic data entry').

1.4.72 Specialist interviews

Specifically related to executive, business to business, medical or specialist samples or depth interviewing.

1.4.73 Subcontractor

A consultant or business engaged by the Organisation to perform services as a third party to the main contract with the Client.

1.4.74 Supervisor

An individual who, on behalf of the Organisation, undertakes at least one of the following tasks:

- (a) Job interviews and selecting new employees.
- (b) Training.
- (c) Appraisals.
- (d) Allocating work.
- (e) Job monitoring, project and quota control.

1.4.75 Supplier

A provider of products or services that have an impact on the services delivered to the Client by the Organisation.

1.4.76 Syndicated research

Multi-Client projects where the same data are available to more than one Client.

1.4.77 System

Set of interrelated or interacting elements.

1.4.78 Team leader

The person given responsibility for a group of Interviewers.

1.4.79 Telephone interviewing

The process of administering questionnaires by the Interviewer over the telephone.

1.4.80 Telephone room

A central facility housing a group of telephone lines used for market research recruitment/interviewing.

1.4.81 Theatre test

(see also: 'Hall test' or 'Clinics')

The process of pre-recruiting participants to be interviewed simultaneously at one location (e.g. cinema advertising testing, computer labs, car clinics).

1.4.82 Traceability

Ability to trace the history, application or location of that which is under consideration.

1.4.83 Validation – Interviewer quality control

A Supervisor's check of an Interviewer's work to confirm the correct person has been interviewed and that the instructions have been properly carried out.

1.4.84 Verification – data related

A checking process during data coding and data entry stages, undertaken by a second person, to verify accuracy and completeness of a task.

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2 Systems structure and management

2.1 Introduction

This Section specifies requirements for the structure and management of systems that provide the framework for an Organisation to implement effective quality market research requirements. It does not attempt to prescribe the extent, type and format of system documentation. This may differ from Organisation to Organisation depending upon specific needs and should take the form and type most appropriate to the Organisation and its service provision. Organisations may range from small boutique agencies to large multi-national companies.

Figure 2 shows the key concepts associated with Section 2.

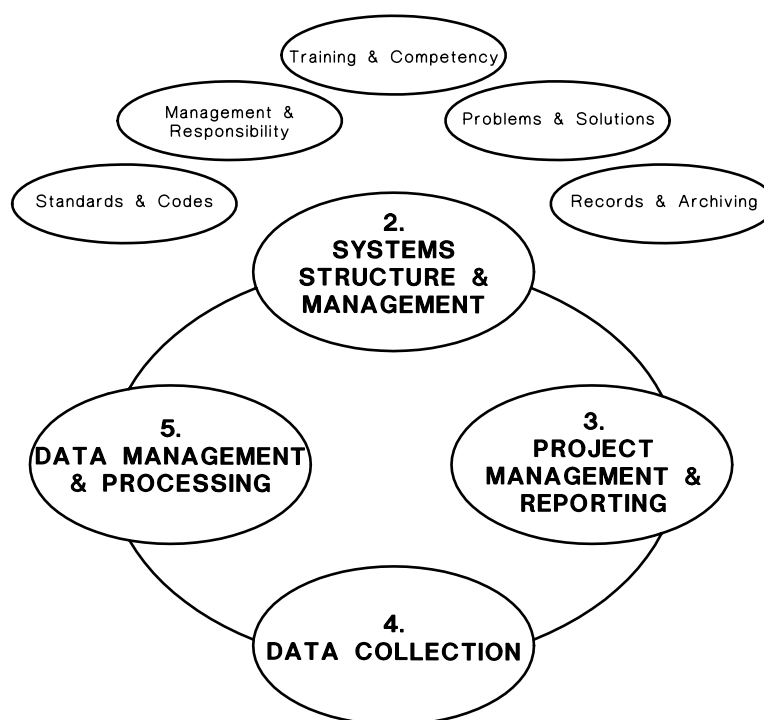


FIGURE 2 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – SYSTEMS STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

2.2 Organisation and responsibilities

2.2.1 Quality management system

The research Organisation shall apply a quality management system which covers all the requirements of the present Australian Standard.

2.2.2 Organisational requirements

To meet the requirements of this Standard an Organisation shall be bound by the *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour*. This shall be evidenced by any one of the following:

- (a) Full membership of the AMSRS by at least one Senior Executive or Manager.
- (b) AMRO membership.
- (c) IQCA accreditation.
- (d) QPMR qualification by at least one Senior Executive or Manager.

2.2.3 Organisation chart

The Organisation shall document an Organisation chart demonstrating:

- (a) Organisational structure and interfaces with other related business entities;
- (b) evidence of accountabilities and responsibilities of those working within the market research quality management system; and
- (c) clear lines of communication.

2.2.4 Job descriptions

Job descriptions shall exist for person/s holding management and market research system responsibilities and accountabilities.

2.2.5 Senior management requirements

The Organisation shall provide evidence of senior management commitment to the development and implementation of the market research quality management system and continually improving its effectiveness by:

- (a) Obtaining knowledge and understanding of relevant standards, codes, guidelines and legislation including the *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour*, *Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) data collection standard*, *Privacy Act 1988 – Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000* and the *State Lottery and Gaming Legislation (Acts, Regulations and Codes by State)*.
- (b) Communicating the importance of meeting the requirements of this Standard and its relevant support systems, including the *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour*, *Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) data collection standard*, *Privacy Act 1988 – Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000* and the *State Lottery and Gaming Legislation (Acts, Regulations and Codes by State)*.

- (c) Ensuring sufficient and appropriate resources to enable effective management of the system.
- (d) Planning and providing sufficient resources to ensure training and staff development appropriate to the needs of the system.
- (e) Appointing a Quality Manager, with enough authority to be responsible for the whole system and who has the responsibility of organising audits in order to make sure the current Australian Standard is applied.

2.2.6 Quality Manager

The Organisation shall appoint a Quality Manager who is a senior member of management and who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have responsibility and authority that includes:

- (a) Ensuring compliance to the standards, codes, guidelines and legislation as listed above and as appropriate to the research activities of the Organisation.
- (b) Ensuring the market research quality management system accurately reflects the policy requirements, the *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour*, *Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) data collection standard*, *Privacy Act 1988 – Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000* and the *State Lottery and Gaming Legislation (Acts, Regulations and Codes by State)*; and is available in a format appropriate and accessible to users.
- (c) Maintaining currency of the system to reflect current Organisational practices and industry Standards as changes occur.
- (d) Managing system changes to ensure only the latest version of the documented system is in use.
- (e) Initiating and providing effective and timely training and staff development appropriate to the needs of the system.

2.3 Training, development and competencies

2.3.1 Training requirements

Commitment to training, development and competency shall reflect accountability to senior management. The Quality Manager shall be responsible for:

- (a) determining the need for knowledge and competency throughout the Organisation;
- (b) planning and coordinating training and development requirements;
- (c) ensuring personnel have the knowledge of the relevant standards, codes and legislative requirements, including the *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour*, *Privacy Act 1988 – Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000* and the *State Lottery and the Gaming Legislation (Acts, Regulations and Codes by State)* to perform their role;

- (d) ensuring ready access to the current versions of standards, codes and legislation as outlined above (Item (c)), on an as needs basis;
- (e) ensuring personnel are aware of the importance of system activities and the need to comply with standards, codes and legislation;
- (f) managing the training of personnel as required to ensure continued system compliance; and
- (g) informing employees of changes and developments in Organisational market research quality system management.

2.3.2 Project specific competency requirements

Personnel working on a project or part thereof shall be appropriately trained or experienced in the required skills. Competency assessment or appropriate supervision and monitoring may be undertaken as required to ensure competency standards are maintained.

2.3.3 System and records

The Organisation shall establish and maintain an appropriate documented system and records for the management of training and competency. This shall take into account both existing and potential training needs.

GUIDANCE

Organisations should refer to their current structure and systems for managing human resource matters and ensure the requirements of this Section are included.

Organisations accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 should also refer to their current quality assurance system for managing accountabilities, responsibilities, communication and inter relationships within the Organisation.

2.4 Documented systems

2.4.1 Documentation requirements

Records shall be established and maintained to provide evidence of traceability to this Standard.

The market research quality management system documentation shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) statements of policy in relation to the system standards and the Organisation's commitment;
- (b) documented procedures which provide a systematic approach to planning and project management, operational matters and control of critical processes; and

- (c) identification of records management and traceability as appropriate to the system.

GUIDANCE

Where the term ‘market research quality assurance system documentation’ or ‘system documentation’ is used, the intention refers to processes established, documented in an appropriate manner, implemented and maintained.

The extent, type and format of system documentation may differ from Organisation to Organisation, depending upon the size of the Organisation, nature of work undertaken, technology bias and competency of personnel. This documentation may take any form or type appropriate to the Organisation and its service provision.

2.4.2 Control of documents and electronic formats

Documents, including those in electronic format, required within this system shall be controlled. Copies of quality management system documents shall be available at all locations in the Organisation and in a manner appropriate to the user.

As a minimum, system information shall:

- (a) be approved prior to release;
- (b) be reviewed and updated as Organisational or legislative changes occur;
- (c) have a read only option or other equivalent system to ensure that only the approved version is available (electronic formats); and
- (d) be legible and appropriate to the user.

The Organisation shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that it is the final version of a document that is passed on to subsequent stages (including to the Client). This shall include the identification of superseded documents (to ensure they are not used in error).

2.4.3 Records management and traceability

Records shall be established and maintained to provide evidence of traceability of process and conformity to system and legislative requirements.

A system to control records shall be established and maintained. The records management system shall be appropriate to the format of the record (e.g. hard copy or electronic), and shall take into account the need for:

- (a) legibility;
- (b) identification;
- (c) collection;
- (d) indexing;
- (e) filing;

- (f) storage; and
- (g) future access and retrieval capability.

GUIDANCE

Organisations accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 should also refer to their current quality assurance system for opportunities to integrate the requirements of this standard into the current quality system documentation. There is no requirement for this to be a stand-alone system and many facets of this Standard, particularly Section 2, duplicate or complement the current quality management approach.

2.4.4 Safekeeping and confidentiality

Records and materials shall be kept and safeguarded in accordance with:

- (a) the Organisation's privacy policy;
- (b) any negotiated agreement with a Client; and
- (c) current accounting and legislative requirements for retention and current privacy and confidentiality legislation.

Such material may include, but not be limited to:

- (i) questionnaires and discussion guides;
- (ii) sampling frames;
- (iii) other data;
- (iv) prompt materials;
- (v) test products;
- (vi) project records;
- (vii) internal audits;
- (viii) relevant notes of meetings;
- (ix) contracts and agreements; and
- (x) maintenance records.

Where appropriate, an electronic format is acceptable provided that a quality assurance system is in place to ensure electronic system archival, backup and retrieval capability and privacy legislation is adhered to.

GUIDANCE

This Clause (2.4) should be read in conjunction with Clause 3.17, *Project records*. Electronic record keeping needs to be managed so that archived records are periodically retrieved and tested to ensure effective management of records. Software packages appropriate for retrieval of archived materials should also be kept to facilitate the retrieval process.

2.5 Project quality management system

2.5.1 Project management

The following requirements apply to project management of market research:

- (a) Projects shall be uniquely identifiable by project name and/or number which shall be recorded on key records relating to the project and traceable to the project.
- (b) Following project confirmation, resources shall be reviewed for adequacy and appropriateness prior to project commencement. This shall be the responsibility of a senior delegated project representative accountable for the quality assurance of the project.
- (c) Project requirements shall be documented and agreed in writing between the Client and the Organisation prior to commencement of the project.
- (d) Clearly defined evidence of the appointment of a subcontractor to provide services shall be communicated to the Client as part of the agreement to provide research services.
- (e) Clearly defined evidence of responsibilities and accountabilities for work undertaken within the project scope, including the project leader and lines of reporting, shall be in place.
- (f) The project leader shall be knowledgeable in the *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour* and competent to deliver against the requirements of this Code.

GUIDANCE

The *AMSRS Code of Professional Behaviour* requires that the use of a subcontractor is made known to the Client. Actual subcontractor identity need only be supplied to the Client on request.

2.5.2 Changes and amendments to project

Should changes to project requirements or amendments to the project brief occur after the original agreement then:

- (a) such changes or amendments shall be documented and acknowledged by both the Organisation and the Client;
- (b) a review of appropriateness of resources shall be undertaken and the need for change communicated to the project stakeholders; and
- (c) evidence of resource changes shall be kept and be traceable to the job.

2.5.3 Project monitoring

Systems shall be established such that monitoring of critical stages and functions within the project shall ensure the research process meets both the stated needs of the Client, as documented

in the project brief, and the market research quality assurance system within the Organisation.

GUIDANCE

This may be achieved through:

- allocation of work to competent personnel;
- communication of changes to the project requirements throughout the life of the project;
- adherence to documented procedures and processes within the Organisation's market research quality system, including training and competency requirements;
- the use of a project status checklist to monitor and record progress of critical stages of the project, in particular the research process and the Organisation's market research quality system; and
- communicating project status to key stakeholders, including personnel working on the project and the Client, as required within the scope of the project.

2.5.4 Project completion

The Organisation shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that final versions of documents are passed on to subsequent research stages, including the Client.

GUIDANCE

Effective mechanisms may include, but not be limited to:

- project files or electronic folders;
- unique identification of projects through project numbers (refer to Clause 2.5.1);
- identification and labelling of superseded or rejected documents;
- version numbering; or
- check lists.

Organisations currently accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 or the *Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA)* standard should review their project file (or folder) management systems and integrate any additional aspects identified from this section.

Project management of this Standard has a primary focus on:

- identification and traceability of processes and decisions within the project;
- resource adequacy;
- defined accountabilities, responsibilities and capabilities; and
- change management within the project scope and deliverables.

2.6 Purchasing and subcontractor management

2.6.1 Subcontractors

Subcontracted market research activities may include but not be limited to:

- (a) fieldwork;
- (b) Interviewers/Recruiters;
- (c) data processing;
- (d) mail and despatch agencies;
- (e) transportation of test materials; and
- (f) freelance Researchers.

2.6.2 Non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements

A current non-disclosure or confidentiality agreement shall exist with all the Organisation's subcontractors conducting market research activities on behalf of the Organisation.

2.6.3 Purchasing services

The Organisation shall remain entirely responsible for all services carried out in connection with the project, including any subcontracted services relating to this Standard.

Purchasing subcontractor services shall be managed through the establishment of a documented system that appoints and reviews subcontractors of market research services according to the following criteria:

- (a) If a subcontractor is used who is not registered with this Standard, the subcontractor shall agree to comply with relevant clauses of the Standard as agreed with the Organisation. Care shall be taken to identify the responsibilities with regard to exchange of information.
- (b) The subcontractor's ability to meet quality assurance requirements of the Codes relative to the services they shall provide.
- (c) Subcontractor selection criteria and selection process.
- (d) The type of service provided.
- (e) Past performance in providing service, including documentary evidence of service performance having been reviewed.

GUIDANCE

Organisations accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 may also refer to the requirement for purchasing and subcontracting services, including the review and monitoring of critical suppliers.

2.7 Maintenance of equipment

The Organisation shall establish and maintain procedures for the maintenance of equipment, including planned maintenance.

This shall be appropriate to the consequences of failure or malfunction, and where relevant, the capability of the equipment (including hardware and software) to produce the required output shall be confirmed prior to installation.

GUIDANCE

Organisations accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 should also refer to their current quality assurance system for managing resources, including sustainability of resources to ensure capability to deliver services to the Client.

2.8 Reviewing the effectiveness of the quality management system

2.8.1 General

The Organisation shall effectively monitor and manage the research process and the quality management system by:

- analysing the functioning of the research process and the quality management system;
- analysing the causes of problems if any and implementing corrective or preventative measures; and
- recording of actions taken to prevent any repetition of such problems.

There shall be a way of confirming that due actions have been taken and that these are effective.

2.8.2 Research problems

The Organisation shall ensure that problems identified (either in the process or outcome) in relation to work undertaken in:

- (a) research work, including systems and resources (human and physical) management;
- (b) actual performance outcomes; and
- (c) service delivery

shall be identified and controlled to remove such discrepancies.

Procedures shall include the requirement to record problem identification that is traceable to the problematic activities.

Problematic or faulty work shall be managed in a manner that:

- (i) segregates it from acceptable work;

- (ii) reviews and either rejects and removes the work from subsequent processing to prevent use in error; or
- (iii) accepts the work with editing or other amendment.

Records shall be maintained in the relevant project file (e.g. hard copy file, electronic folder, etc.) in relation to the non-use or disposal of incorrect or incomplete project work and the accountability for the decision made.

2.8.3 Systems and standards problems

Inconsistencies in the application of codes, industry standards, legislative or market research quality systems matters within the business of an Organisation shall be identified and controlled to remove such discrepancies.

Procedures shall include the requirement to record problem identification that is traceable to the problematic activities.

2.8.4 Client complaints

A system to document, review and resolve Client complaints shall be established and maintained.

The system shall include the identification and recording of the causes of the complaint and actions taken to resolve the problem and prevent recurrence.

There shall be a review mechanism to confirm that such actions taken have been effective in resolving the complaint.

GUIDANCE

This is an important Section as it deals with problem fixing and the process of ensuring problems are not repeated.

Organisations accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 will have in place a non-conformance, corrective and preventive action system that should align to this Standard's requirements.

2.9 Internal audit requirements

The requirements of an internal audit are as follows:

- (a) An internal audit program shall be undertaken sufficient to demonstrate:
 - (i) compliance to the Organisation's market research quality system requirements, including the associated codes, standards and legislative requirements; and
 - (ii) compliance to Client specifications.
- (b) The system of auditing shall include an audit schedule, scope and methodology.
- (c) Conduct of audits shall ensure:
 - (i) internal Auditors shall be trained and shall not audit their own work; and

- (ii) records of audits, follow up actions and outcomes shall be recorded, and where appropriate, referenced to Client projects.

GUIDANCE

Organisations accredited to AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000 will have in place an internal audit system and schedule. The requirements of this section may be incorporated into the existing system and schedule.

3 Project management and reporting

3.1 Introduction

This Section sets out requirements for the structure and management of systems in support of research contracts and agreements between the Organisation and the Client. It prescribes requirements for communication and consultation between the various stakeholders in relation to the development of the proposal or quotation, leading to contracts or agreements for project delivery.

The objective of this Section is to achieve management of both the project development and project delivery to agreed standards of quality assurance. In applying the standards for this section the overall project quality management system (refer to Clause 2.4) shall be adhered to.

Any data collected directly by Researchers is covered in this Section, particularly qualitative data.

NOTES:

- 1 Requirements for data collected by a field team are covered in Section 4.
- 2 Requirements for data analysis that leads to reporting are covered in Section 5.

Figure 3 shows the key concepts of Section 3.

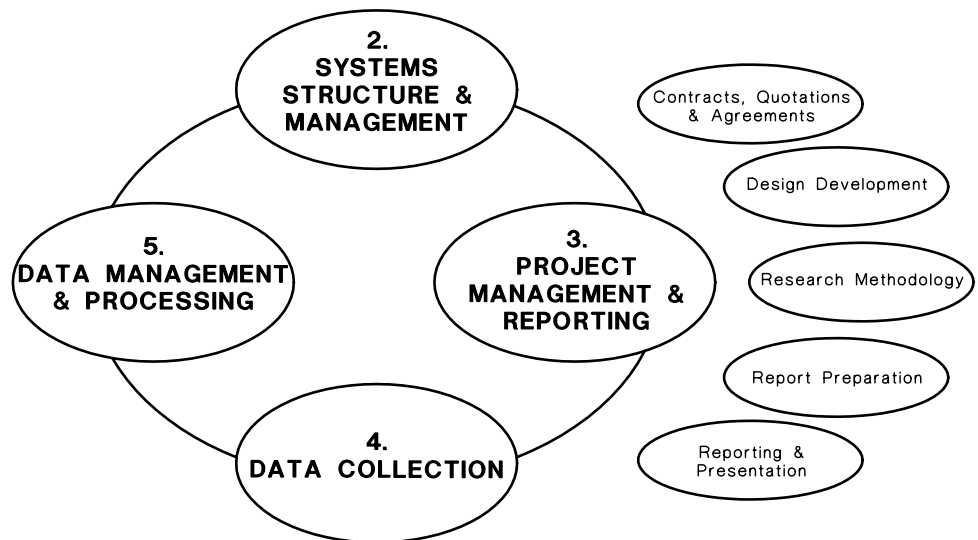


FIGURE 3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM –
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

3.2 Research proposals and price quotations

3.2.1 Client request or brief

A brief, in the form of a written request, should be obtained from the Client clearly outlining their requirements and expectations. This document then forms part of the eventual contract or agreement between the Client and the Organisation.

Where the Client does not provide a written brief or provides incomplete details, the information available and consequent assumptions made shall be evident in the research proposal or price quotation document.

GUIDANCE

The Organisation should make every effort to encourage the Client to provide a written brief and should assist in providing the Client with the necessary tools, e.g. a list of concise contents, a checklist or a template. If applicable, the brief should contain the following information:

- Introductory statement or executive overview – A concise statement of the overall purpose of the research.
- Background – Relevant facts, history, circumstances related to the research.
- Previous research – Relevant research information that already exists.
- Need for research – A specific statement of why research is needed and how the findings will be used. The key decisions impacted by the research should be specified where appropriate.
- Research objectives – Details of the questions that need to be answered and the issues that need to be explored.

- Target audience – Who the research should include.
- Sampling – Including whether Client lists are to be supplied and any other issues expected to impact sampling.
- Methodology requirements – Indication of a particular methodology where this is desired.
- Reporting – What level of reporting is required and the format results are required in.
- Budget – The amount of money available for the research and whether this is inclusive or exclusive of GST. Where an amount is not nominated, the brief should ideally include key considerations with budget implications.
- Timeline – A detailed timeline which specifies dates for all project stages from the brief date to final reporting.
- Expectations of research proposal and selection criteria – Outline in separate sections what research proposals should include and how research proposals will be assessed. This should also include information on whether the research proposal is competitive.
- Professional membership or quality assurance information – Specify any professional membership or quality assurance pre-requisites, e.g. AMSRS, IQCA, QPMR.
- Contact details – For questions or information pertaining to the research proposal. Other potential inclusions – A statement on conflict of interest; written guarantees regarding confidentiality, copyright etc.; requirement for indemnity insurance; provision of question and answer sessions which consultants are either required or encouraged to attend.

Information in a research proposal or price quotation may be specified as part of a formal proposal or letter proposal, or as part of secondary documentation sent to or from the Client prior to starting work.

3.3 Research proposals and projects requiring research design

3.3.1 Design component

A research proposal differs from a price quotation in that it provides input and advice in relation to the request (Client brief) received from the Client and proposes the most appropriate research approach to the issues or needs raised.

When responding to a Client enquiry that involves developing the research design, a research proposal shall be prepared. The research proposal shall include an outline of the work to be undertaken, or reference specific briefing documents or previous studies.

As a minimum, research proposals, including letter proposals to the Client, shall include, where relevant, the following information:

- (a) research objectives and background (refer to Clause 4.3.2)