

Dental Research Administration Study Design Checklist

Qualitative Interview and/or Focus Group Study

This checklist is based on the guidelines for research at the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. By following the checklist, researchers can develop their studies more efficiently. Please note that this is not necessarily comprehensive, and some items might not apply to your specific study, since every study is unique. It is important that you think about all of the unique aspects of a potential study before commencing with your research.

Initial Project Development

- The study aim(s) are well-defined including the overarching goal(s) / question(s)
- Relevant literature has been reviewed / environmental scan has been completed
- Dental Research Administration has been contacted to discuss the research process

Subjects / Groups

- The study aims can be achieved with the chosen study population / groups
- Appropriate inclusion / exclusion rules have been developed
- The subject population is accessible
- Subject recruitment and payments (if applicable) have been reviewed and approved by Dental Research Administration and the department chair

Variables

- The factors under study and outcomes have been defined
- All variables that are needed to describe the study population, such as demographics, will be collected if necessary

Further Elements of Study Design

- Deidentification and recording procedures are in place as appropriate
- The methodology is adequate to ensure best data collection practices
- Potential sources of bias have been identified and minimized
- Other limitations of the study, and their effects on the study's potential conclusions, have been identified and minimized
- Interview and/or moderator guides have been designed and written using the appropriate communication / behavioral theories and questions are written at the appropriate comprehension level

Logistical Concerns

- A realistic, acceptable timeline has been developed
- A realistic, acceptable budget has been developed and approved
- All team members are aware of their roles and are prepared for the study, including being current with required trainings

- A data and safety management plan has been defined to protect / organize collected data and any necessary contracts have been administered by Dental Research Administration
- A script for the interview / focus group has been developed for each audience group
- An explanation of why the study is being done (so that a participant may understand the study) and how long the interview / focus group will last has been written
- Logistics have been considered – where the interview / focus group will occur, who will moderate, who will facilitate
- Compensation for interview / focus group participation has been considered and a plan for compensation has been developed if applicable
- A source of funding has been identified, if applicable
- A plan for recording / transcribing the interview / focus group data has been developed
- A plan for obtaining consent from subjects has been developed (e.g., information sheet, informed consent form)
- If sensitive questions are included (e.g., questions concerning use of illegal drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, STIs, etc.), a justification of the questions is included as well as plans to protect confidentiality and provide counseling, if applicable

Protocol

- The research importance is justified in the protocol
- The protocol is well-written and is free of grammatical / typographical errors
- The protocol includes all required sections
- The protocol includes enough detail for the study to be reproduced by an independent researcher
- The protocol has been finalized and the study Principal Investigator (PI) has approved the final version

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Considerations (no study activities may begin until after IRB approval)

- A research coordinator has been contacted to assist with developing supporting paperwork (e.g., consent forms, advertising, recruitment materials, etc.)
- All paperwork has been prepared by the coordinator and reviewed and approved by the study team
- The PI has signed the IRB paperwork
- All paperwork has been approved by Dental Research Administration