

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)
- Australian Market & Social Research Society (AMSRS)
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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.

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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.

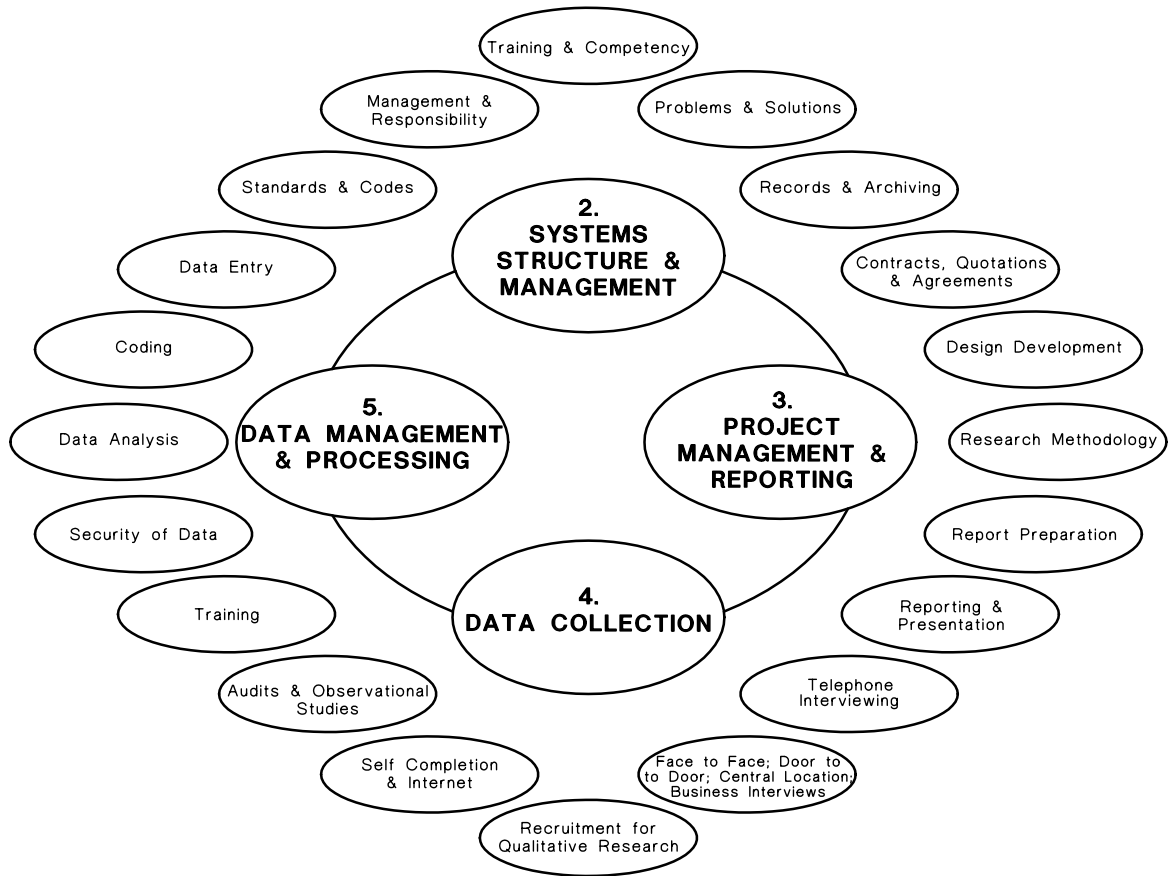


FIGURE 1 MARKET AND SOCIAL RESEARCH STANDARD

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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.