

# APPLYING THE MRS EDI BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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'If you're not intentionally including people, you may be unintentionally excluding them'



MRS Senior Client Council

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DIVERSITY &  
INCLUSION BEST  
PRACTICE GUIDES:  
USE OF LANGUAGE



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DIVERSITY &  
INCLUSION BEST  
PRACTICE GUIDES:  
SAMPLING METHODS



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DIVERSITY &  
INCLUSION BEST  
PRACTICE GUIDES:  
USE OF DIFFERENT  
METHODS



Inclusive language recognises that words  
matter

# 5 QUICK TIPS TO MAKE RESEARCH LANGUAGE MORE INCLUSIVE

## Do:

**Provide enough options and in an order that avoids bias** so respondents can feel confident in their declaration

**Use gender-neutral pronouns (they/them/person/people)** when talking about people to avoid assigning people a gender that they might not associate with

Where possible **ask how individuals prefer to be addressed/how they prefer to describe themselves**

## Don't:

**Use the word “diverse” to describe a person or people** - a single person cannot be diverse

**Use ‘other’ when asking for personal information**, be more specific (i.e., ‘prefer to self-describe’)

# THE MRS HAS PROVIDED GUIDANCE ON WAYS TO ASK CERTAIN QUESTIONS AND OPTIONS TO PROVIDE

## What is your ethnic group? (Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

- Another ethnic group
  - Arab
  - Any other ethnic group, please describe (open text)
- Asian / Asian British
  - Indian
  - Pakistani
  - Bangladeshi
  - Chinese
  - Asian background, please describe (open text)
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
  - African
  - Caribbean
  - Black / African / Caribbean background, please describe (open text)
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
  - White and Black Caribbean
  - White and Black African
  - White and Asian
  - Mixed / Multiple ethnic background, please describe (open text)
- White
  - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
  - Irish
  - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
  - White background, please describe (open text)
- Prefer to self-describe (open text)
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

It's good practice to prefix the sections with why they are being asked & what you plan to do with the results upfront

All these questions must be voluntary

More inclusive sampling reflects the desire to deliver samples more representative of the population, but also recognises commercial opportunities that otherwise might be missed

# THE MRS HAS PROVIDED A LIST OF QUESTIONS TO HELP DETERMINE IF YOUR RESEARCH IS REPRESENTATIVE

- What is the sampling approach for the proposed project?
- Will a Nat Rep or any other defined sample be required?
- What are the proposed sampling characteristics and parameters?
- Are the sampling characteristics and parameters selected suitable for the research objective?
- Are there any groups of participants for which collecting Nat Rep demographic data may require additional design considerations, e.g. children or vulnerable participants?
- What are the quota targets for the research and where will these come from?
- Should any quotas be interlocked and, if so, which ones and are these feasible?
- Are there any proposed population characteristics required for the research which are small segments and may require sample boosts?



# A REMINDER ON THE UPDATED NAT REP

The 'old' Nat Rep (age, gender, location, sometimes socioeconomic status) overlooked ethnicity, sexuality, disability – and was an approach which didn't reflect the full variety of human experience

**If your sample needs to be nationally representative (Nat Rep), the MRS best practice recommends the following characteristics** for it to be genuinely representative of the current UK population:

- Age
- Gender identity
- Region
- Social grade
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Physical disability and/or mental health conditions

The MRS Code of Conduct requires that research projects undertaken with a Nat Rep sample declare the characteristics that have been used to define Nat Rep

Representation is about more than just  
quotas; it's about ensuring participants  
can respond

# INCLUSIVE BENEFITS OF VIRTUAL RESEARCH

May **allow those with visible disabilities to be fully involved** without being impacted by how others in the group may interact with them

**Allow participants to use their own tools** which help them (such as screen readers)

Online interviews can involve **close captioning**

**Less physical impact on participants** during interaction – comfort of the space (chairs etc.) vs. length of the session

May be a **more comfortable space for those who have a preference to think and consider answers** before speaking (introverts vs. extroverts)

**Participants can mute themselves** while remaining present and engaged in the research

**Reduced levels of distraction** (e.g. from others in the room)

**No need to consider other types of accommodations** (accessible bathrooms, accessible tube stations etc.)

# INCLUSIVE BENEFITS OF F2F RESEARCH

Don't have to rely on **transcripts which may be slow or incorrect**

For a lot of people **F2F can be easier to communicate**

**Easier to read non-verbal cues** (such as body language)

Especially for participants with SpLDs\*, **staring at a screen can have a negative effect upon participants' cognitive abilities and ability to focus**

Online interviewing is **only inclusive if people have access to the tools in the first place**

\*a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) means that someone has a difference or difficulty with one or more certain parts of learning

# CONSIDERATIONS FOR MORE INCLUSIVE METHODS

**Consider any materials being shown (colour of text etc.)**

**Consider how you set up the room – and allow people to choose where they sit**

**Allow participants to complete tasks in their own time/at their own speed**

**Have the technology to support virtual groups, such as closed captioning**

**Allow participants extra time if needed**

# EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS YOU COULD MAKE:

## Physical disabilities

- Double check to be sure that sites are accessible, be prepared to find an alternate location if not
- When supplying directions: consider accessible traveling routes, accessible parking spaces, and physical obstacles, such as stairs, curbs or steep hills that may hinder or delay a person using a wheelchair, cane, or crutches
- Find a location where you can sit down and be at eye level with each other
- Allow persons using canes or crutches to keep them within easy reach
- Allow guide dogs to accompany the interviewee
- Consider things you can do to help (e.g. pay for a taxi, help find a parking spot, let them bring their carer, ask them if they want to use sign language)

While virtual interviews may be easier for some with physical disabilities, accommodations can be made to ensure participants are not excluded from F2F research

# ACCOMMODATIONS CAN BE BENEFICIAL TO MANY, NOT JUST THOSE PARTICIPANTS YOU EXPECT

For example – carers, or those with young children:

- Online interviews require less time for transport to/from the interview which makes it easier to participate
- There are less costs for participants involved in online interviews (no travel, no childcare required) which may make it easier to get a representative group (less of the traditional white middle class)

However,

- Distractions can have a negative impact on participation, if no one else is at home to help out

**THE 'CORRECT' TERMINOLOGY IS PERSONAL:** IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO ASK. AND IF YOU CAN'T ASK, STAY NEUTRAL & DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

PEOPLE ARE NOT HOMOGENOUS - **LIVED EXPERIENCES ARE IMPACTED BY EVERY ASPECT OF SOMEONE'S IDENTITY** AND SAMPLES SHOULD RECOGNISE THAT

OFFER PEOPLE ACCOMMODATIONS WHERE YOU CAN: **SET PEOPLE UP FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATION**, NOT FOR FAILURE

INCLUSIVITY SHOULDN'T BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT: **BUILD ACCESSIBILITY INTO DESIGN**



## Key resources:

[MRS Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Language](#)

[MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Sexual Orientation](#)

[MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Data on Sex And Gender](#)

[MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions](#)

[MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Ethnicity Sample Data](#)

[Is your research really representative](#)

[Representation in Research: Commercial Benefits Study](#)

[MRS Code of Conduct: May 2023](#)

[The Future of Nat Rep \(video\)](#)

[Representation in research FAQs](#)

[Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Different Methods](#)

[MRS Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Language](#)

Don't forget to ask your agencies to sign the  
MRS Inclusion Pledge  
[MRS Inclusion Pledge | Market Research Society](#)

