

Appendix 2 – Quality Scoring Guidelines

Criteria	0 = Not at all	1 = Very slightly	2 = Moderately	3 = Complete
Explicit theoretical framework	<i>No mention at all.</i>	<i>Reference to broad theoretical basis.</i>	<i>Reference to a specific theoretical basis.</i>	<i>Explicit statement of theoretical framework and/or constructs applied to the research.</i>
Statement of aims/objectives in main body of report		<i>General reference to aim/objective at some point in the report.</i>	<i>Reference to broad aims/objectives in main body of report.</i>	<i>Explicit statement of aims/objectives in main body of report.</i>
Clear description of research setting		<i>General description of research area and background e.g. ‘in primary care’.</i>	<i>General description of research problem in the target population e.g. ‘amongst GPs in primary care’.</i>	<i>Specific description of the research problem and target population in the context of the study e.g. nurses and doctors from GP practices in the east midlands.</i>
Evidence of sample size considered in terms of analysis		<i>Basic explanation for choice of sample size. Evidence that size of the sample has been considered in study design.</i>	<i>Evidence of consideration of sample size in terms of saturation/ information redundancy or to fit generic analytic requirements</i>	<i>Explicit statement of data being gathered until information redundancy/ saturation was reached or to fit exact calculations for analytic requirements</i>

Representative sample of target group of a reasonable size	<i>No statement of target group.</i>	<i>Sample is limited but represents some of the target group or representative but very small.</i>	<i>Sample is somewhat diverse but not entirely representative e.g. inclusive of all age groups, experience but only 1 workplace. Requires discussion of target population to determine what sample is required to be representative.</i>	<i>Sample includes individuals to represent a cross-section of the target population, considering factors such as experience, age, and workplace.</i>
Description of procedure for data collection		<i>Very basic and brief outline of data collection procedure e.g. 'using a questionnaire distributed to staff'.</i>	<i>States each stage of data collection procedure but with limited detail, or states some stages in details but omits others.</i>	<i>Detailed description of each stage of the data collection procedure, including when, where and how data was gathered.</i>
Rationale for choice of data collection tool(s)		<i>Very limited explanation for choice of data collection tool(s).</i>	<i>Basic explanation of rationale for choice of data collection tool(s) e.g. based on use in a prior similar study.</i>	<i>Detailed explanation of rationale for choice of data collection tool(s) e.g. relevance to the study aims and assessments of tool quality either statistically e.g. for reliability & validity, or relevant qualitative assessment.</i>

Detailed recruitment data		<i>Minimal recruitment data e.g. no of questionnaire sent and no. returned.</i>	<i>Some recruitment information but not complete account of the recruitment process e.g. recruitment figures but no information on strategy used.</i>	<i>Complete data regarding no. approached, no. recruited, attrition data where relevant, method of recruitment.</i>
Statistical assessment of reliability and validity of measurement tool(s) (Quantitative only)		<i>Reliability and validity of measurement tool(s) discussed, but not statistically assessed.</i>	<i>Some attempt to assess reliability and validity of measurement tool(s) but insufficient e.g. attempt to establish test-retest reliability is unsuccessful but no action is taken.</i>	<i>Suitable and thorough statistical assessment of reliability and validity of measurement tool(s) with reference to the quality of evidence as a result of the measures used.</i>
Fit between stated research question and method of data collection (Quantitative)	<i>No research question stated.</i>	<i>Method of data collection can only address some aspects of the research question.</i>	<i>Method of data collection can address the research question but there is a more suitable alternative that could have been used or used in addition.</i>	<i>Method of data collection selected is the most suitable approach to attempt answer the research question</i>
Fit between stated research question and format and content of data collection tool e.g. interview schedule (Qualitative)	<i>No research question stated.</i>	<i>Structure and/or content only suitable to address the research question in some aspects or superficially.</i>	<i>Structure & content allows for data to be gathered broadly addressing the stated research question(s) but could benefit from greater detail.</i>	<i>Structure & content allows for detailed data to be gathered around all relevant issues required to address the stated research question(s).</i>

Fit between research question and method of analysis (Quantitative)		<i>Method of analysis can only address the research question basically or broadly.</i>	<i>Method of analysis can address the research question but there is a more suitable alternative that could have been used or used in addition to offer greater detail.</i>	<i>Method of analysis selected is the most suitable approach to attempt answer the research question in detail.</i>
Good justification for analytic method selected		<i>Basic explanation for choice of analytic method</i>	<i>Fairly detailed explanation of choice of analytic method.</i>	<i>Detailed explanation for choice of analytic method based on nature of research question(s)</i>
Assessment of reliability of analytic process (Qualitative only)		<i>More than 1 researcher involved in the analytic process but no further reliability assessment.</i>	<i>Limited attempt to assess reliability e.g. reliance on one method.</i>	<i>Use of a range of methods to assess reliability e.g. triangulation, multiple researchers, varying research backgrounds.</i>
Evidence of user involvement in design		<i>Use of pilot study but no involvement in planning stages of study design.</i>	<i>Pilot study with feedback from users informing changes to the design.</i>	<i>Explicit consultation with steering group or statement or formal consultation with users in planning of study design.</i>
Strengths and limitations critically discussed		<i>Very limited mention of strengths and limitations with omissions of many key issues.</i>	<i>Discussion of some of the key strengths and weaknesses of the study but not complete.</i>	<i>Discussion of strengths and limitations of all aspects of study including design, measures, procedure, sample & analysis.</i>