

## Defining Research Table

	Research	Quality Activities			Surveillance / Monitoring of Usual Practice
		Quality Improvement	Service Evaluation	Clinical Audit	
Purpose	The attempt to derive generalizable or transferable new knowledge to answer questions with scientifically sound methods, including studies that aim to generate hypotheses as well as studies that aim to test them, in addition to simply descriptive studies.	The purpose of QI projects is to correct workflow processes, improve efficiencies, reduce variations in care, and address clinical administrative or educational problems.	Designed and conducted solely to define or judge current care or service provision and identify improvements if required.	Designed and conducted to review the delivery of evidence-based best practice care and identify improvements if required.	Designed to investigate the health issues in a population to improve population health or investigate an outbreak or incident to help in disease control and prevention.
	Quantitative research – designed to test a hypothesis as in a randomised controlled trial or can simply be descriptive as in a survey. Qualitative research – can be used to generate a hypothesis, usually identifies/explores themes following established methodology.	Designed to assess or improve a process, program, or system or to improve performance as judged by established/accepted standards.	Designed to answer: “What standard does this service achieve?” or “How is this service performing?”	Designed to answer: “Does this service reach a predetermined standard?”	Designed to answer: “What are the health issues in this population and how do we address them?” or “What is the cause of this outbreak and how do we manage it?”
Aim	Addresses clearly defined questions, aims and objectives. (Qualitative research may not establish the exact questions to be asked until research is underway.)	Improves or creates a program/ process/system that results in greater safety, efficiency, or satisfaction.	Measures current service with or without reference to a standard.	Measures clinical care delivery against guideline-recommended key performance indicators.	Systematic, quantitative, or qualitative methods may be used.
Method	Quantitative research: compares between interventions or over time, or evaluating a change. Some quantitative research does not involve interventions, e.g. surveys and observational studies. Qualitative research: seeks to understand better the perceptions and reasoning of people.	Implementing a change supported by systematic data collection that monitors the change in process/ intervention/ workflow (could include methods such as PDSA, LEAN, SIX SIGMA, or Redesign).	Involves an intervention in use only. The choice of treatment, care or services is that of the health professional and patient/service user according to guidance, professional standards and/or patient/service user preference.	Involves an intervention already in use. The choice of treatment, care or services is that of the health professional and patient/service user according to clinical guidelines, professional standards and/or patient/service user preference.	Involves an intervention in use only. Any choice of intervention, treatment, care or services is based on best public health evidence or professional consensus.
	Usually involves collecting data that are additional to those for routine care but may include data collected routinely. May involve treatments, samples or investigations additional to routine care. May involve data collected from interviews, focus groups, and/or observation.	Usually involves analysis of existing data to improve systems related to processes and outcomes (i.e. cost, productivity, quality).	Usually involves analysis of existing data but may include interviews or questionnaire/s.	Usually involves analysis of existing data but may include interviews or questionnaire/s.	May involve analysis of existing routine data supplied under agreement; interviews or questionnaire/s to those in the population of interest; or evidence review.
	Quantitative research – may involve allocating patients/service users/healthy volunteers to an intervention (may involve randomisation). Qualitative research – uses a clearly defined sampling framework underpinned by conceptual or theoretical justifications.	Establish measures to determine if a specific change actually leads to an improvement in systems and processes.	No allocation to intervention: the health professional and patient/service user have chosen intervention before service evaluation.	No allocation to intervention: the health professional and patient/service user have chosen intervention before the audit.	No allocation to intervention.

Adapted from: October 2017 Defining Research Table, Health Research Authority, National Health Service, London, viewed 8 October 2018, [http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/docs/DefiningResearchTable\\_Oct2017-1.pdf](http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/research/docs/DefiningResearchTable_Oct2017-1.pdf)



COURAGE



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



ENGAGE

Printed copies are uncontrolled

Effective from: 20 July 2023 | Review date: 20 July 2025 | Version: 1.0 | TCHHS-CLIN-1-GUIDE-2365



Queensland Government