



MRS Senior Client Council

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION BEST PRACTICE GUIDES WORKING WITH RESEARCH AGENCIES AND SUPPLIERS TO ENSURE INCLUSIVE SAMPLES

Updated July 2024



Introduction

This guidance provides a client perspective on inclusion and has been prepared by members of the MRS Senior Client Council and client colleagues.

The MRS Code of Conduct requires transparent information about which sampling characteristics and parameters have been used when defining samples as representative of segments of the population, such as when reporting Nationally Representative samples. For detailed guidance on the ethical and legal issues, including MRS Code of Conduct requirements, please refer to the following:

- [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](#)

For further advice about sampling issues, it is recommended that the following MRS Senior Client Council guidelines are referred to in conjunction with this document:

- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Accessibility by Design Guidance for Clients](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Language](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Different Methods](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Sampling Methods](#)

Working with Research Agencies and Suppliers to Ensure Inclusive Samples

The responsibility for inclusivity through samples is shared between clients, agencies & suppliers.

MRS recommendations to clients are to:

- **Work with suppliers who have signed the [MRS Inclusion Pledge](#).**
(If preferred suppliers have not yet signed up to the MRS Inclusion Pledge why not ask them to sign up!)
- Have they defined the characteristics used for Nat Rep?
- Ask your suppliers to conform to the guidelines issued by MRS which provide the appropriate legal and ethical best practice on the following:
 1. Collecting ethnicity sample data
 2. Collecting sample data on sexual orientation
 3. Collecting data on sex and gender
 4. Collecting sample data on physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions
- **Increase your focus on including ED&I within your roster reviews and research tenders/request for proposals**, both as business and within the adopted research methods.
- As clients, ask for **visibility of any internal EDI standards and principles** agencies and suppliers have in place, as standard.

Client should define the characteristics expected from research agencies and suppliers during the project design stage. For quantitative research considerations include:

- Have you provided clear definitions to your suppliers? For example: age, gender identity, social grade, region, ethnicity, physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions and sexual orientation are all options for consideration when determining sampling parameters.
- Have you set clear quotas?
- When requesting a sample, discuss with suppliers (field suppliers,

panel companies, or full-service agencies) what characteristics will meet requirements and of all relevant considerations?

For qualitative research, check with your agencies and suppliers to ensure they have capability to recruit inclusive samples from seldom heard groups. This may require flexibility in recruitment approaches.

Client should ensure they are having conversations with their agencies and suppliers about the most appropriate methods, and the compromises that may need to be taken. Issues to consider include:

- **No** excluding some participants because it is difficult, or because the viewing facilities (or recruiters) say it is not possible.
- If a data collection site is inaccessible, **be prepared to find alternate locations.**
- **Ensure suppliers have the technology to support virtual groups**, such as closed captioning, and that they adjust approaches to allow participants extra time if needed.

Remember, there's a good chance that as clients you may not know who these accommodations might benefit, but by building these types of considerations into your approach more inclusive samples should result.