

Developing a questionnaire

When developing a questionnaire, it is often helpful to use both closed and open questions.

Closed questions collect quantitative data. They are quicker for users to answer and the results are easier to analyse. Types of closed questions include: choosing from a list of options; ranking options in order; and selecting a point on a scale.

Open questions collect qualitative data in the form of descriptive information; for example, by asking ‘What do you feel you need support with?’ They enable users to answer freely and in more detail, while providing insights you perhaps hadn’t anticipated.

When **designing your questions**, the following points can help to ensure good quality responses:

- **Keep your questions simple, focused, and easy to understand.**

Remove unnecessary words, use non-technical language, and keep your sentences short. Be specific; for example, use ‘daily’ or ‘weekly’ rather than ‘often’ or ‘usually’.

- **Keep your survey short.**

We recommend a maximum of 15 questions (5 minutes for online surveys, 10 minutes for paper or phone, and 15 minutes for face-to-face).

- **Avoid leading questions.**

These are questions that prompt or encourage a specific answer; for example, ‘How satisfied are you with the service?’

- **Ask one thing at a time.**

For example, split ‘Did you find the session helpful and interesting?’ into two questions, because “helpful” and “interesting” are not the same thing.

- **Focus on the objectives of your survey.**

It can be tempting to take advantage of the opportunity to gather information that is not related to your immediate objective. For example, you may want to ask about other aspects of your service or test interest in an event or project. This will only make your survey longer and less appealing to participants.

Provide participants with clear instructions. This could include:

- Why you are conducting the survey and how the information will be used.
- Any potential benefits for the participant; for example, improved services.
- Instructions for navigating the survey; for example, a requirement to answer all questions.
- How long it will take to complete the survey and when the survey will close.

Test your survey with a small group of people before rolling it out.

This will provide insight into how easy it is for participants to respond, and how useful the results are, so you can tweak it.

Source: www.impactsupport.org

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