



Questionnaire Development Worksheet

Purpose – to provide a general overview and best practices for developing questionnaires to collect data

Questionnaires allow you to collect a lot of data across a large population relatively quickly and inexpensively. However, for the data to be useful, your respondents need to answer the exact question you are asking. Because it’s essential that all instructions and questions are clear, it is absolutely essential that you pilot any instrument with members of the target population.

Guidelines for Questionnaire Development

- begin with the full number of topics you would like to explore with the targeted responders
- keep your respondents in mind at all times and write from *their* perspective not your own
- ensure each question is exploring only a *single* topic or issue
- consider using multiple questions for topics that are more complex or abstract—it’s ok to break down questions into individual components to improve clarity
- ensure forced choice options are mutually exclusive
- avoid leading questions that hint at an acceptable response or otherwise influence responders
- mix up the question formats, if possible, to keep respondents engaged
- pilot both the questionnaire and its directions - ask a member of the respondent group to complete the questionnaire in a single sitting; then have them go through the questionnaire with you and describe, in their own words, what each question was asking and how they answered
- note how much time it takes for respondents to complete the questionnaire during the pilot and include that in the directions so respondents can plan accordingly

Tips:

- When piloting your instrument with a member of the target group, ask them to “think out loud” so you can understand what they believe each question is asking, and how they are forming their reply; note where you intent and the responder’s intent do not match and adjust the question to fit the responder’s perspective
- consider actively seeking instrument pilots based on sex, age groupings, class, or ethnicity where appropriate – to ensure the questions are sensitive to issues of importance to these groups and
- You can maximize space by covering more than one aspect of an issue on a single line with multiple scales:

	how often?	how useful?
Feedback from my supervisor	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4