

## **AMSRS guideline on Interview Length**

### **Basis for the guidelines**

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#### **Explanatory note to Rule 5 of the Code states:**

More generally, Researchers should avoid interviewing at inappropriate or inconvenient times. They should also avoid the use of unnecessarily long interviews; and the asking of personal questions which may worry or annoy Respondents, unless the information is essential to the purposes of the study and the reasons for needing it are explained to the Respondent.

### **Guidelines**

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In order to minimise the intrusiveness of market research interviewing, to secure the continuing cooperation of the public and to limit the effects of interview length on data quality, the following guidelines should be observed:

- The likely duration of an interview (or the likely range of durations) should be accurately stated at the beginning of the interview.
  - Face to face interviews in which no incentive or prize is provided should not exceed 25 minutes in average duration. If an incentive or prize is provided, the interview should not exceed 50 minutes in average duration.
  - Telephone interviews in which no incentive or prize is provided should not exceed 20 minutes in average duration. If an incentive or prize is provided, the interview should not exceed 40 minutes in average duration.
  - Intercept interviews in which no incentive or prize is provided should not exceed 15 minutes in average duration. If an incentive or prize is provided, the interview should not exceed 30 minutes in average duration.
- Longer durations may sometimes be appropriate where a substantial incentive or prize is provided, where the interests of the respondent or of society in general are clearly served by participating, in certain executive interview situations, in self-completion questionnaires or where the inherent interest or variety of topics can sustain longer durations.
- Unless by prior arrangement with the respondent, telephone calls should not be made before 9am. They should not be made after 8.30pm on weeknights or after 5.00pm on weekends. In some locations, it may be appropriate to restrict these times still further.
- Unless by prior arrangement with the respondent, door-to-door interviews should be conducted during daylight hours.

With the exception of the guideline on interviewing times, which are mandatory, the above provisions have the status of guidelines. Nonetheless, it is expected that all members will use every endeavour to ensure that they are adhered to.

The durations stated above are to be regarded as upper limits, rather than as acceptable interview lengths. In general, interviews should be structured to maintain interest and avoid repetitious or burdensome questioning, regardless of their duration or method of administration. Further, all interviews should be as short as possible, given the requirements of the study in question.