

Questionnaire for Research

Identify seven types of questions that you might use in a questionnaire. They are:

1. Quantity or information. Used to gather specific data that can be quantified or classified (as opposed to qualitative, open-ended questions).

When did you join the company? _____

Although this could cause confusion – are we expecting a date (and if so, in what format?) or a time frame (for example, five years ago)? It might be useful to provide an example to show the respondent what we are expecting (for example, October 2005).

2. Classification. Used to categorise responses into two or more groups. The categories have no ordering to them – i.e., one category is no 'better' than the next.

Are you male or female (please tick)? Male Female

When asking people what age group they fall into it is common to group the ages across decadal boundaries. For example, 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, etc. rather than 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, etc. People sometimes feel bad about being classed in an 'upper' age group when they just fall into that group. For example, 30-year-olds do not like to think of themselves as being their thirties and being grouped with 30- to 39-year-olds. By the time they reach the middle of the decadal range they are resigned to the fact that they are in that group (for example, 35-year-olds know they are in their thirties) and are happy to tick that box.

Also make sure that categories are mutually exclusive to avoid confusion. For example, age ranges of 20–25, 25–35, 35–45, etc. would be confusing for those aged 25, 35, 45, etc.

3. List or multiple choice. Provides the respondent with a number of options to choose from (they can select more than one).

What sources of literature have you used for you literature review (please tick all that apply)?

Books Journal articles Conference proceedings

Newspapers Case studies Company reports

Company documentation Sales literature

The Internet Internal reports Past projects

Other (please specify) _____

4. Scale. Used to rate the respondent's feelings towards something. How easy do think the software is to install?

Very easy Easy Average Slightly difficult Difficult

5. Ranking. Used to order a series of options. You should not provide too many options for the respondent to rank (ten is probably an upper limit) as this can make it difficult to complete accurately and honestly.

What did you spend the most time on during your software development? Please rank the

following in order from 1 (spent most time on) to 7 (spent least time on).

Requirements capture

Coding

Design

Testing

Debugging

Documenting software

Other (please specify) _____

6. Complex grid or table. Used to gather similar responses on a range of questions.

Please complete the following table (enter ticks where appropriate) with your views on different aspects of the completed software system.

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	Very poor	Below average	Average	Above average	Excellent
Interface					
Installability					
Functionality					
Ease of use					
Robustness					
Accuracy					

7. Open-ended. Used to obtain extended, qualitative answers. Do you have any further comments you would like to make?

Question order

The order you place your questions in a questionnaire can influence respondents and affect your response rate. Loughborough University (2008) suggests the following principles to follow when deciding on your question order:

Place the important questions in the first half of the questionnaire. Respondents do not always complete questionnaires so if there are some important questions you would like answered, make sure that these come early on.

Don't put awkward, difficult or embarrassing questions at the start of the questionnaire. This may put

people off completing the questionnaire. This implies that you should put easy, non-threatening questions at the start to draw the respondent in.

Go from general to specific questions.

Go from factual to abstract questions.

Go from closed to open questions.

Leave questions regarding personal information until the end.