
Data Collection Methods for Evidence-Based Management: Survey Design, Sampling and Quality Course

26 – 30 October 2026
Rome





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Programme Summary

Data collection methods for evidence-based management is the subject of this one-week training course for managers who commission, run or rely on surveys, interviews and administrative data, ending in a data collection plan for one management question. Organisations often act on figures whose origin and error nobody has tested. The programme moves from the management question and method choice, through questionnaire and sample design, to fieldwork control and data quality, then to a worked plan. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in data collection methods for evidence-based management.

The Business Case

When data are gathered before the question is settled, teams collect what is easy rather than what is needed. Managers who fix the question, the method and the quality checks first can judge whether evidence is strong enough to act on.

- Decision Evidence Quality: Improves as method, sample and question wording are justified before collection starts.
- Repeat Fieldwork: Falls as pilot testing and monitoring catch errors during collection.
- Data Reuse: Increases as collected data are documented so that other teams can find and trust them.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Total Survey Error framework: Its sources of error, from coverage to measurement and non-response, structure the diagnosis in Session 2.
- Probability sampling theory: Sampling frames, selection and sample size logic guide the sample design work of Session 3.
- FAIR data principles: Findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable data guide the documentation standards in Session 4.

Intended Participants

- Managers who commission surveys, studies or evaluations and must judge the evidence returned.
- Heads of function who need reliable customer, employee or operational data for planning.
- Analysts and research coordinators who design instruments and supervise fieldwork teams.
- Programme and policy leads who combine primary collection with administrative and secondary data.

The programme serves public service, healthcare, banking and retail organisations.



Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to translate a management question into information needs and a fitting collection method.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose sources of error in a proposed survey or interview design.
3. Participants will be able to construct a questionnaire whose items are clear, neutral and testable.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate a sampling approach and the size of sample it requires.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise fieldwork controls that protect data quality and respondent trust.
6. Participants will be able to justify a data collection plan to a sponsor with its limits stated.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Management Questions and Method Choice

Which method of data collection answers this management question at acceptable cost and risk?

- Management Question and Information Need Statement
- Primary and Secondary Data Source Map
- Survey, Interview and Focus Group Selection Grid
- Observation and Administrative Data Options
- Method Cost and Burden Comparison

Day 2: Error Sources and Data Quality Risk

Where can a collection design go wrong, and how large is the risk?

- Total Survey Error Component Review
- Coverage and Non-Response Risk Check
- Measurement and Interviewer Effect Review
- Leading Question and Social Desirability Check
- Collection Risk Register

Day 3: Questionnaire and Sample Design

How are questions and samples built so that results can be trusted?

- Question Wording and Response Scale Design
- Interview Guide Structure
- Sampling Frame and Selection Method
- Sample Size and Margin of Error Estimate
- Pilot Test and Cognitive Interview Protocol



Day 4: Fieldwork Control and Data Documentation

What controls keep collection consistent, ethical and reusable?

- Fieldworker Briefing and Training Pack
- Consent and Respondent Protection Notice
- Fieldwork Monitoring and Back-Check Log
- Data Cleaning and Validation Rules
- FAIR Data Documentation Record

Day 5: Planning Data Collection for One Management Question

Is the data collection plan ready for a sponsor to approve and a team to run?

- Applying the Session 1 Method Grid to the Chosen Question
- Testing the Session 2 Risk Register Against the Design
- Checking the Session 3 Questionnaire and Sample Choices
- Applying the Session 4 Fieldwork and Documentation Controls
- Completing the Data Collection Plan

Methodology

The programme is built around structured exercises. Participants work in small teams on anonymised briefs from healthcare, retail or public service settings and test each design choice as a sponsor would. No statistical software is required.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting poorly worded survey items and testing them on a peer group.
- Suggested activity: Choosing a sampling approach for a staff survey and estimating the sample needed.
- Suggested activity: Auditing a fieldwork log and listing the controls that were missing.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a data collection plan for one management question. It holds the information need, the chosen method and its justification, a draft instrument, a sample design, a fieldwork control plan and a data documentation record. The plan is used to brief a research team or supplier and to seek sponsor approval.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is data collection methods for evidence-based management suitable for managers without a research background?

Yes. Data collection methods for evidence-based management is set at managerial level and assumes familiarity with management reports and simple percentages.

Which frameworks does data collection methods for evidence-based management rest on in this training?

Data collection methods for evidence-based management rests on the Total Survey Error framework, probability sampling theory and the FAIR data principles.

How is the plan from data collection methods for evidence-based management used at work?

You use the plan to brief research teams or suppliers, to seek sponsor approval and to set the method, sample and quality checks before any fieldwork starts.

How does data collection methods for evidence-based management differ from a data analysis programme?

Data collection methods for evidence-based management centres on how data are gathered, sampled and checked, while a data analysis programme centres on what is done with data once they exist.