

Introduction

Market and social research is built on quality and will only continue to flourish if quality levels are maintained and improved. Buyers and users of market and social research need to have a good understanding of the various standards and the confidence to ask for and expect these in the research that they buy or use. At the same time, people who participate in research need assurance that researchers are committed to protecting their interests, especially their privacy.

AMSRO is strongly committed to work with the industry to help ensure the very best quality assurance and to uphold the standard for excellence in market research within Australia. We work:

- To present market & social research with the professionalism of a mature industry
- to promote the benefits of quality assurance to buyers
- to increase the awareness of, and promote the value of, quality assurance to all market research stakeholders
- with our members to ensure that they understand the value behind quality assurance
- to provide the administrative capability to implement quality standards
- to ensure that the costs of accreditation are maintained at cost effective levels
- to continually identify and evaluate the international best practice for market research excellence and use this to set the standards in Australia and
- to drive the continuous improvement of market and social research quality within Australia.

As part of its commitment, certification to ISO20252 is mandatory for all AMSRO members. Newly joining members will have twelve months to achieve certification.

AMSRO also endorses the Australian Market and Social Research Society's (AMSRS) Code of Professional Behaviour and has a policy of encouraging all research professionals employed by AMSRO member companies to join AMSRS and participate in its professional development programs.

Quality standards for market and social research

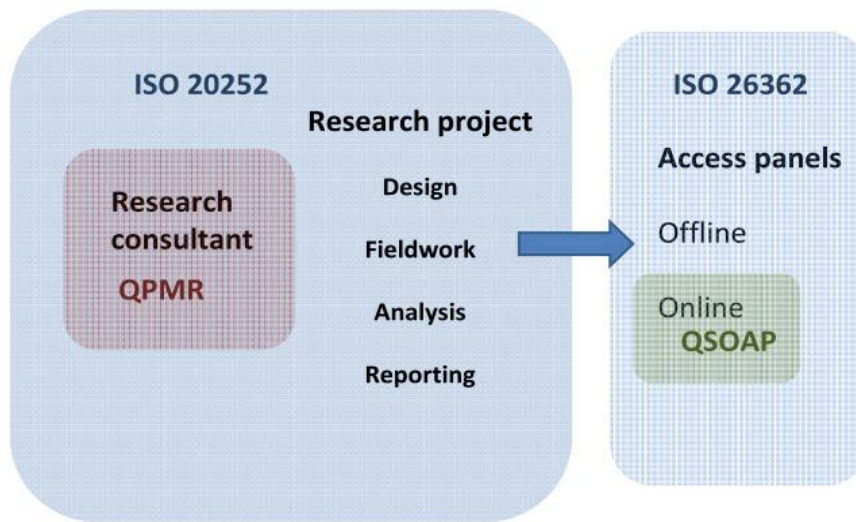
AMSRO supports three Standards:

- AS: ISO 20252 market, opinion and social research
- AS: ISO 26362 access panels in market, opinion and social research
- QSOAP Gold for online access panels

Interlinked with these Standards is the Qualified Practising Market Researcher scheme (QPMR) managed by the AMSRS. For more information on QPMR please go to www.amsrs.com.au.

Summary of market and social research standards

2/2010



A list of member companies certified to relevant industry standards is available here:

- [ISO 20252](#)
- [ISO 26362](#)
- [QSOAP Gold Standard for online access panels](#)

AS: ISO 20252: Market and Social Research Standard

The Australian Standard for market, opinion and social research (AS: ISO 20252) was published by Standards Australia in January 2007, replacing the earlier Standard AS 4752.

The Standard establishes the terms and definitions as well as the service requirements for organisations and professionals conducting market, opinion and social research.

Benefits of certification to AS: ISO 20252

The adoption of consistent, standardised process in an AS: ISO 20252 based quality management system:

- enhances the management of risk
- increases efficiency and productivity
- improves product and service quality
- improves buyer confidence
- increases loyalty and satisfaction
- is a model to reflect the professionalism of your organisation
- assists in the protection of respondent privacy
- becomes a training platform for new employees
- fosters a culture of quality/continuous improvement
- confirms your organisation's commitment to quality assured processes internationally
- increases opportunities for international business
- brings professionalism to our industry

In addition, it can assist in:

- reducing waste

- streamlining processes and avoid duplication
- minimising exposure to risk and
- reducing staff turnover.

We encourage all buyers and users of market and social research to purchase, or at least be familiar with, the Standard.

The Standard can be purchased from

NCS International - www.ncsi.com.au/BuyStandards.html

SAI Global - www.saiglobal.com

AS: ISO 26362: Access panels in market, opinion and social research

The Australian Standard for access panels in market, opinion and social research (AS: ISO 26362) was published by Standards Australia in December 2009.

The Standard specifies the terms and definitions as well as the service requirements for organisations and professionals who own and/or use access panels for market, opinion and social research. It develops the criteria against which access panel providers can be evaluated and against which the quality of access panels can be assessed.

It applies to all types of access panels whether recruited or used online (eg via the internet) or offline (eg via telephone, postal or face-to-face).

We encourage all buyers and users of market and social research to purchase, or at least be familiar with, the Standard.

The Standard can be purchased from SAI Global - www.saiglobal.com

AMSRO has developed an implementation guide for ISO 26362 which is available for a fee to members. Members receive a discount on the fee.

Contact the AMSRO Secretariat for further details.

Assessment and certification to ISO standards

Assessment and certification to ISO 20252 and ISO26362 is available from two Industry-approved certification bodies - SAI Global and NCS International. These organisations are specialists in assessing companies to recognised standards and accredited by JAS-ANZ.

www.saiglobal.com/

www.ncsi.com.au - Assessment and certification to ISO 26362 is available from NCS International.

Companies wishing to be assessed and certified to ISO 20252 are able to seek price quotations from these certification bodies. Fees will typically be based on consultant day rates, with the number of days related to the size of the company assessed and the AMSRO assessment specification for AMSRO members. The fees include a small annual levy collected by the assessment bodies and passed on to AMSRO.

AMSRO assistance

AMSRO has developed support documentation and runs training sessions to assist members gain and maintain both ISO standards.

Answers to frequently asked questions about ISO 20252 and ISO 26362 are [available here](#).

AMSRO contracts The Cruse Partnership as their QA Manager. The Cruse Partnership offers assistance to members working towards ISO standards or QSOAP Gold. Details of services and costs are [available](#)

[here](#).

For more information contact the Executive Director, Jane Gregory: jane@amsro.com.au

AS: ISO 20252 offer for small businesses

AMSRO recognises the burden placed on small companies by the costs associated with quality assurance. We have brokered a deal with NCS International to provide small companies who are AMSRO members with certification for a flat annual fee of \$1250.

Small companies are defined as organisations employing no more than 5 full time staff members, with only one office and with limited services provision, such as project management or consultancy only or data collection only. The final terms of this definition are at the discretion of the Quality Committee.

Small companies who have an AMSRS member but who are not AMSRO members pay the usual fee for the ISO 20252 Standard, but AMSRO offers them access to the general documentation for the Standard at no charge . The services of The Cruse Partnership are also available to them at the usual day rate.

QSOAP Gold

QSOAP Gold is available to companies operating an online access panel that is certified to ISO 26362. The company must be also be certified to ISO 20252 to achieve the QSOAP Gold standardfor its panel.

The company operating the panel must be an AMSRO member.

AMSRO is the authorising and issuing body for QSOAP Gold. Auditing for QSOAP Gold is conducted via a third party certification process by NCS International. It can be done as an additional process when the audit for ISO 26362 is conducted.

The Cruse Partnership offers assistance to members working towards QSOAP Gold . Details of services and costs are [available here](#).

Quality Committee

A Quality Committee has been established to look after the quality assurance interests of the market and social research industry in Australia. It is funded by AMSRO and supported by AMSRS.

The terms of reference for the Committee are [available here](#).

Background QSOAP

In 2008, AMSRO took a lead in developing a new Standard to help protect the integrity of online research - the Quality Standard for Online Access Panels (QSOAP).

QSOAP generally covers a specific online panel within a company, offering transparency and process as to how surveys are completed. It covers online data collection and online project management and has two levels - QSOAP and QSOAP Best Practice. The QSOAP standard is only available to AMSRO members.

AMSRO saw QSOAP partly as an interim measure until the ISO 26362 International Standard for access panels for market, opinion and social research was published in Australia. This happened in December 2009.

Following the publication of ISO 26362 in Australia, the decision was made to accept no more applications for QSOAP. The QSOAP Standard has now been withdrawn.

QSOAP Best Practice was renamed QSOAP Gold Standard and retained.

Background - MRQA

Quality assurance for the market and social research industry was originally managed by Market Research Quality Assurance (MRQA). MRQA was backed jointly by AMSRO and AMSRS and its role was to oversee quality standards in Australia. It was run by the MRQA Council, made up of members representing AMSRS, AMSRO and research buyers. In 2007 AMSRO took sole responsibility for MRQA and has since incorporated its work into the Quality Committee.

In May 2008 AMSRO appointed Cruse Partnership as its QA Manager, responsible for managing the quality standards in co-ordination with the Quality Committee.

Background - IQCA

Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) was founded in 1991. It was a quality assurance scheme designed to ensure that data collection procedures provided reliable, high quality results, providing confidence to buyers and respondents. Initial funding was provided by a group of major research buyers. It has now been replaced by ISO 20252.

Contact

For more information on any issues relating to AMSRO and quality assurance, please contact Jane Gregory, Executive Director AMSRO: jane@amsro.com.au or (02) 9552 4618.